

STRATEGIST

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Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief

Strategist

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

MR. LINCOLN'S MILITARY TALENT

To Hooker on the 5th of June, 1863:
He warns Hooker not to run any risk of being entangled on the Rappahannock "like an ox jumped half over a fence and liable to be torn by dogs, front and rear, without a fair chance to give one way or kick the other." On the 10th he warns Hooker not to go south of the Rappahannock upon Lee's moving north of it. "I think Lee's army and not Richmond is your true objective power. If he comes toward the upper Potomac, follow on his flank, and on the inside track, shortening your lines while he lengthens his. Fight him, too, when opportunity offers. If he stay where he is, fret him, and fret him" On the 14th again he says: "So far as we can make out here, the enemy have Milroy surrounded at Winchester, and Tyler at Martinsburg. If they could hold out for a few days, could you help them? If the head of Lee's army is at Hartinsburg, and the tail of it on the flank road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the animals must be very slim somewhere; could you not break him?"

work by Wick

LINCOLN WAS WAR STRATEGIST, PERSHING SAYS

Springfield, Ill., Feb. 12.—In his address here tonight on Abraham Lincoln, Gen. John J. Pershing paid heed to a new side of the life of the great emancipator in discussing Lincoln's war strategy.

"In considering his life and his many-sided genius," said Gen. Pershing, "little has been said of his grasp of military affairs except by way of criticism. As commander in chief of the armies of the north, his was the burden of the war. It was vital to the nation to direct aright the energies of a people unpre-



GEN. JOHN J.
PERSHING.

pared for war in the struggle for the preservation of the union.

Mastered Fundamentals.

"Without military training or equipment, but with a fund of common sense and an exceptional capacity for concentrated thought upon any subject that came up for determination, he was called upon to consider grave questions of strategy in the conduct of the war. Considering his own experience in the contests of life, he clearly saw and understood the important moral factors upon which victory ultimately depends, and became a master of the fundamental principles of war."

Gen. Pershing read extracts from President Lincoln's correspondence with generals in command of the union armies to show the military responsibilities that fell upon the shoulders of the "commander in chief."

Proved a Strategist.

"The letters that I have read," said Gen. Pershing, "show the impress of Lincoln's thorough study of the conduct of war. They sound like the words of a trained strategist. It is astonishing that such mature wisdom should be found in a man who up to a few years before had given no thought to the art of war."

"But, after all, military sagacity is but the application of common sense, through the exercise of which all principles of strategy have been evolved,

and Lincoln's fund of common sense seemed inexhaustible. Time and again he gave counsel to his successive commanders, on the Rappahannock, at Gettysburg, which demonstrate the clarity of his judgment and his accurate grasp of situations."

Source of Lincoln's Greatness.

Vice President Coolidge, the other speaker at tonight's meeting, said:

"It is not to the city of Washington that men must turn if they would understand Abraham Lincoln. The beginning and the end of his nature is here. Here was the life which he carried with him. Too often the world turns its eyes to the high places, thinking that from them will come its revelations and its great events, forgetful that a greater wisdom is in those who 'mind not higher things, but condescend to men of low estate.'"

"The greatest epoch in all human history began in a manger. This great American, the foremost world figure of the nineteenth century, came out of a frontier clearing and spent his early manhood in a village of a few hundred souls."

"God rules, and from the Bethlehems and the Springfields he sends forth his own to do his work."

Chicago Tribune
Feb 13 1922

Lincoln Revealed as Military Strategist

Letter Written by the President to Stanton in 1861 Proposed Plan of Campaign Against Confederacy.

Abraham Lincoln in the somewhat unfamiliar guise of military strategist is revealed in a letter addressed by the President to the Secretary of State, Stanton, written October 5, 1861. In the communication, which has recently come into the possession of the Rosenbach Company, President Lincoln proposed a plan of campaign against the Confederacy. The plan was submitted to the War College, but by the time that institution had passed upon it the position of the enemy forces had changed and it was too late to act upon it. The text of the letter follows:

"On or about the 5th of October (the exact date to be determined hereafter) I wish a movement made to seize and hold a point on the railroad connecting Virginia and Tennessee, near the mountain pass called Cumberland Gap.

"That point is now guarded against us by Zollicoffer with 6,000 or 8,000 rebels at Barboursville, Ky., say twenty-five miles from the gap toward Lexington.

"We have a force of 5,000 or 6,000 under Gen. Thomas at Camp Dick Robinson, about twenty-five miles from Lexington and seventy-five miles from Zollicoffer's camp, on the road between the two, which is not a railroad anyhow between Lexington and the point to be seized, and along the whole length of which the Union sentiment largely predominates.

"We have military possession of the railroad from Cincinnati to Nashville, Tenn., so far as Muldrough's Hill, about forty miles, and the rebels have possession of the road all south of there.

"At the Hill we have a force of 8,000 under Gen. Sherman, and about an equal force of rebels is a very short distance south, under Gen. Buckner.

"We have a large force at Paducah and a smaller at Fort Holt, both on the Kentucky side, with some at Birds Point, Cairo, Mound City, Evansville and New Albany, all on the other side, and all of which, under the gunboats on the river, are perhaps sufficient to guard the Ohio from Louisville to its mouth.

"About supplies of troops, my general idea is that all from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas not now elsewhere be left to Fremont.

"All in Ohio needed in West Virginia be sent there; any remainder be sent to Mitchell at Cincinnati for Anderson.

"All east of the mountains be appropriated to McClellan and to the coast.

"As to movements, my idea is that the one for the coast, and that on Cumberland Gap be simultaneous; and that, in the meantime, preparation, vigilant watching and the defensive only be acted upon (this, however, not to apply to Fremont's operations in northern and middle Missouri) that before these movements

Thomas and Sherman shall respectively watch, but not attack Zollicoffer and Buckner.

"That when the coast and Gap movements shall be ready, Sherman is merely to stand fast; while all at Cincinnati and all at Louisville, with all on the lines, concentrate rapidly at Lexington, and thence to Thomas's Camp, joining him and the whole thence upon the Gap.

"It is for the military men to decide whether they can find a pass through the mountains at or near the Gap, which cannot be defended by the enemy with a greatly inferior force, and what is to be done with regard to this.

"The coast and Gap movements made, Gens. McClellan and Fremont in their respective departments will avail themselves of any advantages the diversions may present."

Another interesting letter, written by Lincoln to J. M. Clayton, then Secretary of State, July 28, 1849, in which the civil war President, then a private citizen, gives his ideas on the position of the Presidency. It reads:

"Dear Sir: It is with some hesitation I presume to address you this letter, and yet I wish not only you, but the whole Cabinet, and the President, too, would consider the subject matter of it. My being among the people, while you and they are not, will excuse the apparent presumption.

"It is understood that the President at first adopted, as a general rule, to throw the responsibility of the appointments upon the respective departments; and that such rule is adhered to and practiced upon. This course I at first thought proper; and, of course, I am not now complaining of it. Still I am disappointed with the effect of it on the public mind. It is fixing for the President the unjust and ruinous character of being a mere man of straw. This must be arrested, or it will damn us all inevitably. It is said Gen. Taylor and his officers held a council of war at Palo Alto (I believe); and that he then fought the battle against unanimous opinion of those officers—This fact (no matter whether rightfully or wrongfully) gives him more popularity than ten thousand submissions, however really wise and magnanimous those submissions may be.

"The appointments need be no better than they have been, but the public must be brought to understand, that they are the President's appointments. He must occasionally say, or seem to say, 'By the Eternal,' 'I take the responsibility'—Those phrases were the 'Samson's locks' of Gen. Jackson, and we dare not disregard the lessons of experience.

"Your Ob't Serv't,
"A. LINCOLN."

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
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LINCOLN, THE MILITARY STRATEGIST

Current events often invite the recall for attention of certain books which might have enjoyed a much wider reading, if they had appeared at a more opportune season. Such a book is *"The Military Genius of Abraham Lincoln,"* written by Brigadier General R. Colin Ballard, of England, and published in 1926. One need not emphasize the timeliness of such a discussion in the light of the present war effort.

Lincoln Lore bulletin has often stressed the value of comments about Abraham Lincoln by Englishmen, because the authors are not so likely to be motivated in their conclusions by political or provincial bias. The opinion of H. G. Wells, with respect to Lincoln's place of pre-eminence in world civilization, the tribute of Lord Curzon who placed two of Lincoln's orations among the three outstanding pieces of eloquence in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, and the emphasis by Lord Shaw on Lincoln's contribution to the legal profession are but cases in point.

Gen. Ballard, of the English army, has given us the most scholarly discussion available on Abraham Lincoln as a military leader. The book read years ago, was again called to the editor's attention by an inscription in a copy, in possession of George P. Hambrecht, director of Vocational Education for the state of Wisconsin. On the preliminary blank pages of the book, in the handwriting of the author and dated March 21, 1927, are these autobiographical statements which are made available through the kindness of Mr. Hambrecht, to whom the notations were addressed:

Autobiographical Note

"I am afraid that this book will seem to you rather cold. I resisted the temptation to let myself go on the personality of Lincoln—the lovable nature of man, the strength and wisdom of the Statesman, because this book is intended as a military essay. I did not want to bias military judgment by dwelling too much on the character of the hero.

"You might like to know how I came to take up the subject of Lincoln. In 1911 I was appointed as lecturer on military history at the British Staff College, and was ordered to make a special study of the American Civil War. It did not appeal to me at all. My attention had been devoted to Napoleon, Wellington, and Von Moltke, and I thought that the efforts of a lot of untrained amateurs would provide little in the way of instruction for high browed regular officers such as we considered ourselves.

"But orders were orders, and so I began to read seriously. After I had been through Ropes, Grant's Memoirs, and 'Battles and Leaders,' I found myself absorbed in the subject, and went on with all the enthusiasm of a convert.

"It is pleasing to remember that in 1912 I stated emphatically that there was more to be learnt from the Civil War than from any other campaign in history. The events of the Great War (World War No. 1) have all tended to prove that Lincoln was supreme as a statesman.

"What I like about him is Grant's description—'In matters of public duty he got what he wished, but in the least offensive way.'

"Our country (England) was flooded with southern propaganda, in which the 'Times' (London) had led the way; financial interests were entirely bound up with the South; military experts declared the North to be incapable of winning the war. Lincoln never lost his temper, but 'got what he wished in the least offensive way'—and got it every time. It was the finest bit of statesmanship the world has ever seen."

The McClellan Episodes

The most unfavorable light in which President Lincoln has been placed as a military leader, usually has been related to some McClellan episode. The criticisms have been largely due to political bias or military prerogative. It is interesting to note the comments of General Ballard who has not been influenced by political interests at least. Ballard concluded that McClellan's own writings will forever convict him in the Lincoln controversies, and should determine very definitely his actual status as a military leader.

Ballard came to the conclusion that the motto of the General could be found in his own words: "I will attack so soon as I feel that my army is strong enough," and commented that such an ideal condition never arrived and probably never would, although McClellan usually had from two to four times as many men as the forces against him. Ballard suggested that Lincoln eventually had but one test he applied to McClellan, before relieving him of his command, and that was "would, and could he defeat the enemy." Lincoln was convinced finally that McClellan would not attack.

Ballard made some point of the political ambition of McClellan and quoted a letter written by Fernando Wood in which the General was urged to "conduct the war in such a way as to conciliate the Confederates."

General Meade's Objective

It is interesting to note that General Ballard confirmed Lincoln's conclusion with respect to Meade's allowing "the crop to go to waste" at Gettysburg where the war should have ended. Ballard called attention to Lincoln's distrust when he read Meade's dispatch which implied he would "drive the enemy from our soil." It was Lincoln's purpose "not to drive the enemy away but to prevent him from getting away."

Ballard made further comment on this most trying situation by stating, "Lincoln, the amateur strategist, grasped it at the time, while his professional soldiers were congratulating themselves on driving the enemy from our soil."

Richmond, Berlin, Tokyo

Possibly there is a rebuff of the popular demand of today, in a military dispatch which Lincoln sent, and emphasized by Ballard as the highest type of military strategy. Lincoln advised, "I think that Lee's army and not Richmond is your main objective." There was a great clamor for the capture of Richmond then, as there is for the attack on Berlin and Tokyo today, but the German army, which continually has been the objective of the Russians with their encircling maneuvers, is feeling the pressure of military strategy.

Political Interference

There is one very interesting conclusion which General Ballard must have written for the eyes of his contemporary English statesmen:

"My belief is that Lincoln was solely responsible for the strategy of the North and proved himself a very capable strategist. But (a very big 'but') this does not mean that other politicians should try to follow his example. The general principles regarding amateur strategists and political interference in war have been proved by history—my point is that general principles do not govern a case of exceptional genius."

Lincoln's Strategy

BY DAVID LAWRENCE

WASHINGTON.— Abraham Lincoln was certainly considered a good political strategist in his day and, in his effort to win the first Republican nomination for the



DAVID LAWRENCE

Presidency, he gave his lieutenants a piece of political advice which Harold Stassen might better have followed in 1948.

Lincoln advised that it wasn't good tactics to try to get a state's delegation away from a "favorite son" but instead to line up "second choices."

Had Stassen done this in Ohio, he might have placed himself in a favorable position for the Republican nomination. Instead, his blunder may cost him the nomination and it could conceivably make it difficult for him to win even second place.

It was not the invasion of a "favorite son" state in itself that hurt Stassen. What Stassen did that is almost unforgivable in politics was to enter certain districts in Ohio where the labor vote is predominant and try to knife Senator Taft because of the latter's championship of the new Labor-Management Relations law.

Offense

After all, this law was passed by two-thirds of both houses of Congress. The Republican party almost to a man supported it. Yet Stassen went into Ohio to capitalize on the record of a Republican leader.

What Stassen did might have been all right in a national campaign in which he was fighting against a Democratic opponent, but going into Ohio to try to wrest the nomination from a rival Republican on these grounds has certainly caused him plenty of embarrassment with the large group of conservatives in the party, who will have the final say when the convention meets.

Republican conventions don't usually nominate people who openly knife party policy or party leaders—especially when that policy seeks to restrain the arbitrary acts of labor leaders that recently cost the nation hundreds of millions in other strikes.

Chas. Steele Key
5-10-48

Driftwood

By FRED B. TROTTER

LOOK TO LINCOLN

Sunday, December the 7th, is the anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and every one will be using the occasion to bolster his particular slant on how to keep the peace. Perhaps if we would look to Abraham Lincoln and study his behaviour in a time of national emergency it might act as a guide to us in the confusion of this hour. For once again our nation is being tested and its very existence is imperiled.

John Haynes Holmes has made a study of the biographies of Lincoln and has brought to light some very interesting parallels to our day.

LINCOLN NOT A PACIFIST

Abraham Lincoln, he points out, was not a pacifist. He believed that there were greater evils than war and that war, if inescapable, must be chosen as the lesser of two evils. He believed that the disruption of the union was a greater evil than war. During his 56 years he encountered three wars and participated in them all. In the first inaugural address with the people of the south in mind he said, "You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend it'." He justified his action in 1861 before he was inaugurated by declaring "In a choice of evils war may not always be the worst."

HE SYMPATHIZED WITH PACIFISTS

Lincoln had a deep sympathy with the pacifist position. You can find no denunciation of it anywhere in his writings. He kept constantly in touch with the Quakers. In his famous letter to the Quakers at Rhode Island he said, "Engaged as I am in a great war, I fear it would be difficult for the world to understand how fully I appreciate the principles of peace, inculcated by the Society of Friends." He did everything in his power to win consideration for conscientious objectors from the government. "For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds," he wrote, "I have done and shall do the best I could and can, in my own conscience, and under my oath to the law."

LINCOLN HATED WAR

Lincoln hated war and never said a good word for it. To him it was an unmitigated evil and justified only when it became an inescapable choice between two evils. Here are the words of Lincoln, "When actual war comes blood grows hot and blood is spilled. Thought is forced from old channels into confusion. Deception breeds and thrives. Confidence dies and universal suspicion reigns. Each man feels an impulse to kill his neighbor, lest he be first killed by him. Revenge and retaliation follow. All this may be among honest men only. But this is not all. Every foul bird comes abroad and every dirty reptile rises up. These add crime to confusion." No wonder great agony fell upon Lincoln's soul and lines of pain and sorrow were carved deep into his face. It has been said that after he gave the call to arms he never knew a happy moment. In 1861 he said,

"I have read upon my knees the story of Gethsemane but the Son of God prayed in vain that the cup of bitterness might pass from him. I am in the Garden of Gethsemane now."

LINCOLN TRIED TO STOP WAR

Lincoln did everything he could to stop the Civil War. He exhausted every effort he could think of to stop the Southern States from seceding from the Union. His first inaugural was a sustained appeal for reconciliation between the north and south. He pleaded with the south to avoid at any cost hasty action. If they wanted to amend the Constitution he was not opposed. In a letter to Mrs. Gurney he declared, "If I had been allowed my way this war would have ended before this." There was no thirst for victory, no desire to fight to the bitter end. It is reported that Lincoln told Stevens, vice-president of the Confederacy that he would accept any terms of peace provided the Union was restored. "Write your own terms," he said in effect, "and I will sign them." He felt that the South and North were sharing together the common punishment of a common transgression. This sentiment found expression in the second inaugural address where Lincoln exposes his own soul: . . . "The Almighty has his own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but

woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must need come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now will to remove, and that he give to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? If God wills that this war continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid for with another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still must it be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

LINCOLN HAD NO HATE FOR ENEMY

Lincoln felt no hatred nor did he seek vengeance against his enemies. Following the war revenge and lust were evident everywhere. The South was hungry, kindness was dead, compassion unknown. Had Lincoln lived it would have been different. Tears ran down his cheeks out of pity when he walked the streets of Richmond. He would have visited no punishment on the South. Listen to his second inaugural address, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in—to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

NO END TO HIS COMPASSION

In this time of hate and confusion we might well turn to this humble, self sacrificing man; the only statesman in high office absolutely uncorrupted by the possession of power. His gentleness, patience and forgiving spirit are not very evident at this hour. There was no end to the compassion of Lincoln's soul.

good Citizens, Washington, D.C. 12-17-47

Lincoln Ruled Out Any Cease-Fire In Fighting

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Abraham Lincoln, although yearning for an end to the bloodshed in the war between the states, refused a cease-fire as one of the possible terms leading to peace.

His stand was emphasized today by an Illinois State Historical Library announcement of the acquisition of two documents connected with peace feelers put out by both North and South.

* * *

ONE WAS an inked copy of a letter Lincoln wrote 10 days before he was assassinated. It contained his suggestions to the South on the "indispensable" conditions for peace and ruled out an armistice.

It was written to John A. Campbell assistant secretary of war in the Confederacy, whose contrary suggestions based on an armistice were embodied in a letter also just acquired.

Dr. Harry Pratt, Illinois state historian, said Lincoln shrewdly made the inked copy as his own memorandum and sent it to Edwin Stanton, his secretary of war, along with the document by Campbell.

* * *

DR. PRATT said the copy of the Lincoln paper was acquired from Gideon Stanton of New Orleans, a grandson of the secretary.

Lincoln's letter, written April 5, 1865, four days before Lee's surrender, got right down to cases:

"As to peace, I have said before, and now repeat, that three things are indispensable.

"1. The restoration of national authority throughout all the states.

"2. No receding by the executive of the United States on the slavery question, from the position assume thereon, in the late annual message to Congress, and in preceding documents.

"3. No cessation of hostilities short of an end of war, and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the government."

Campbell thought of peace being developed through a cease-fire and said at the outset he was submitting "a plan for an armistice" drawn after the Hampton Roads conference with Lincoln.

* * *

LINCOLN had made his position clear already at the Hampton Roads meeting in February of 1864 with three Confederate commissioners.

"Mr. President, is there no way

of putting an end to the present trouble?" had asked Alexander H. Stephens, one of the commissioners and the vice president of the Confederacy.

Lincoln had replied that he knew of only one way and that was for those resisting the Union's laws to stop resistance.

Two days after his April 5 meeting with Campbell, another document made it plain Lincoln had an unchanged attitude.

On April 7, Lincoln wired Gen. Ulysses Grant:

"Gen. Sheridan says, 'If the thing is pressed, I think that Lee will surrender.' Let the thing be pressed."

Two days later Lee surrendered.

Lincoln Fellowship Hears Abe Lauded As Able Strategist

By KAZ OSHIKI

The command system conceived in 1864 by President Abraham Lincoln and Congress was the "most efficient command system we've ever had," one of the nation's top historians of the Civil War period declared in a speech here Monday night.

Prof. T. Harry Williams, of the Louisiana State University department of history, made the statement while addressing the nearly 150 persons attending the 16th annual dinner meeting of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin at the First Congregational Church.

* * *

Pointing to the complicated general staff system set up in the early 1900s, the historian said it did not work too well in either World Wars I or II and it does not seem to work well today.

"Perhaps we ought to go back to the 1864 system," he said.

The 1864 command system, which Prof. Williams said was one of the major reasons the North won the war, was set up after President Lincoln had suffered through a number of inferior military generals.

* * *

The command system started with the President as the commander-in-chief to state the general strategy, then it included a general-in-chief to give the strategy specific form, and a chief of staff to co-ordinate information and intelligence.

Working under President Lincoln were Gen. Ulysses S. Grant as general-in-chief and Gen. Henry W. Halleck as chief of staff. Halleck, who earlier had failed as a general-in-chief, found his "ideal niche" in the command system. As general-in-chief, Grant "possessed in superb degree the ability to think of the war in overall terms and to devise strategy for the war as a whole," the historian said.

"In its efficient centralization of authority, in its delegation of powers, in its essential simplicity, the 1864 command system was probably better than anything we have had since," Prof. Williams concluded.

* * *

When the Civil War broke out, Lincoln was a President who had had no military education and little military experience. However, he proved the dictum that "a remarkable, superior mind and strength of character" are better qualifications for a director of war than knowledge of military affairs.

"Lincoln was a better natural strategist than were most of his generals," the speaker said.

Although Lincoln has been criticized for interfering too

much with military operations, Prof. Williams said it was fortunate that Lincoln did interfere. Union armies before 1864 were led by what the speaker termed "prize incompetents."

* * *

Among the unqualified generals named by the historian were Winfield Scott, George B. McClellan, Halleck, until he found his niche, Joseph Hooker, W. S. Rosecrans, and George Meade.

As Lincoln learned from experience, he steadily grew in stature as a strategist, and according to Prof. Williams, Lincoln "loomed high above the generals through whom he had to work."

Walter D. Kline, Milwaukee, president of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, presided at the dinner meeting. The speaker was introduced by his faculty adviser of 1937 when he studied for his Ph.D. degree at Wisconsin, Prof. William B. Hesseltine.

* * *

Prof. Hesseltine was elected president of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin at a business meeting which followed the address given by Prof. Williams.

Other officers elected were Charlotte Kohn, La Crosse, James R. Durfee, Madison, and George Engbreton, South Wayne, vice presidents; Louis W. Bridgman, Madison, secretary; and Margaret Smith, Madison, treasurer.

Named directors were Mrs. Robert E. Burns, Justice George R. Currie, Benjamin G. Elliott, E. J. Frautschi, Milo K. Swanton and Thomas N. Burke, all of Madison; W. Norman FitzGerald, Dr. Frank L. Klement, and Roland A. Kelling, all of Milwaukee; John W. Gross, Janesville; Edward W. Heller, Marshfield; Jess W. Scott, Neillsville; and Mrs. LaVelle Thompson Maze, Fond du Lac.

Abraham Lincoln's "H-Bomb" Decision

By CYRIL CLEMENS

Abraham Lincoln, it is true, never had to rule on anything so tremendous as the hydrogen bomb, but he had his full share of very difficult decisions. In fact, it may have been he himself who decided not to use chlorine gas against Confederate troops — a matter just about as important in those days as the hydrogen bomb today.

The proposal to use chlorine was made to the War department in April, 1862. At that stage of the war, Lincoln not only was commander-in-chief as President, but he also acted as General in Chief of the Union armies.

War Department records contain a letter written by John U. Doughty of New York City, saying he had devised a chlorine-carrying shell. The records do not contain information as to who rejected Doughty's idea or why it wasn't tried out.

If the project was considered by the Union high command, it is likely that Lincoln knew about it. He kept a very close supervision of the Army's activities until the winter of 1862-1863.

In his letter to Secretary of War Stanton, Doughty said he had devised a projectile to be used "as a means of routing an entrenched enemy." His letter, in part, continues:

"Chlorine is a gas so irritating in its effect upon the respiratory organs that a small quantity diffused in the atmosphere induces incessant and uncontrollably violent coughing. It is two and one-half times heavier than atmosphere and when subjected to a pressure of sixty pounds to the inch, it is condensed into a liquid, its volume being reduced many hundred times. A shell holding two or three quarts would, therefore, contain many cubic feet of the gas.

"If the shell should explode over the heads of the enemy, the gas, because of its great specific gravity, would fall rapidly to the ground. Men could not dodge it and their first intimation of its presence would be by its inhalation.

"This would most effectively disqualify for service every man who was within the circle of its influence, rendering the capture or disarming of them as certain as though both their legs were broken."

Doughty also discussed the humane aspects of using poison gas. He wrote: "As to the moral question involved, I have after watching the progress of events during the last eight months arrived at the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that its introduction would very much lessen the sanguinary character of the battlefield and at the same time render conflicts more decisive in their results."

In the first two years of the war, as his own top General, he not only directed the main strategy but he assumed tactical command. He even ordered divisions to "move at once" from one place to another.

John Hay, one of his secretaries wrote:

"The tycoon is in fine whack . . . he is managing this war, the draft and foreign relations, and planning a reconstruction of the Union all at once.

"I never knew with what a tyrannous authority he ruled the Cabinet until now. The most important thing he decides, and there is no cavil."

There is a story that after Lincoln and members of his cabinet had taken a vote on an important question of policy, he said:

"One aye and six nays. The ayes have it."

Northern Democrats assailed him for not being conciliatory enough towards the Southern states. Republicans in Congress bitterly denounced him for not being more ruthless with secessionists.

But he remained in supreme control of the war effort, making and unmaking Generals, until the South gave up. The only test he applied to a General was whether he could and would defeat the Confederates.

Although Lincoln greatly admired General Ulysses S. Grant's ability, he didn't hesitate to tell him off. In the winter of 1864, 1865, Grant reported that Confederate General Robert E. Lee had proposed a conference with him with the view of taking steps to settle the war.

Whereupon Lincoln dictated the following reply, signed by Secretary Stanton:

"The President directs me to say to you that he wishes you to have no conference with General Lee unless it be for the capitulation of General Lee's army or on some minor and merely military matter.

He instructs me to say to you that you are not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political question. Such questions the President holds in his own hands and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions."

Lincoln's 'H-Bomb' Decision May Have Ruled Out Chlorine

By ALEXANDER R. GEORGE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11—(AP) Although Abraham Lincoln never had to rule on anything so tremendous as the hydrogen bomb, he did have his share of difficult decisions.

It may have been he himself who decided not to use chlorine gas against Confederate troops—a matter almost as weighty in Civil War times as the hydrogen bomb today.

The proposal to use chlorine was made to the War department in April 1862. At that stage of the war Lincoln not only was commander-in-chief as President but he also acted as general-in-chief of the Union armies.

Doughty's Proposal Rejected

War department records contain a letter written by John U. Doughty of New York city saying he had devised a chlorine-carrying shell. The records do not contain information as to who rejected Doughty's idea or why it wasn't tried out.

But if the project was considered by the Union high command, it is likely that Lincoln knew about it. He kept a very close supervision of the Army's activities until the winter of 1862-'63.

Lincoln may have turned down the use of gas on humanitarian grounds or because some of his military technicians did not consider it feasible. The Germans introduced chlorine gas 53 years later at the battle of Ypres and employed it quite effectively there and in other battles during the First World war.

In his letter to Secretary of War Stanton, Doughty said he had devised a projectile to be used "as a means of routing an entrenched enemy." His letter, in part, continues:

"Chlorine is a gas so irritating in its effect upon the respiratory organs that a small quantity diffused in the atmosphere induces incessant and uncontrollably violent coughing.

"It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times heavier than the atmosphere and when subjected to a pressure of 60 pounds to the inch, it is condensed into a liquid, its volume being reduced many hundred times. A shell holding two or three quarts would, therefore, contain many cubic feet of the gas.

"If the shell should explode over the heads of the enemy, the gas because of its great specific gravity would rapidly fall to the ground. Men could not dodge it and their first intimation of its presence would be by its inhalation.

"This would most effectively disqualify for service every man who was within the circle of its influence, rendering the capture or disarming of them as certain as though both their legs were broken."

Saw Humane Aspects

Doughty also discussed the humane aspects of using poison gas. He wrote:

"As to the moral question involved, I have after watching the progress of events during the last eight months arrived at the some-

what paradoxical conclusion that its introduction would very much lessen the sanguinary character of the battle field and at the same time render conflicts more decisive in their results."

The one-time rail splitter repeatedly stuck his neck out in assuming power never granted the executive, counting on Congress to validate his actions later. He authorized seizure of private property, railroad and telegraph lines, the arrest of suspected persons and suspended the writ of habeas corpus in several districts.

In the first two years of the war, as his own top general, he not only directed the main strategy but he assumed tactical command. He even ordered divisions to "move at once" from one place to another.

John Hay, one of his secretaries, wrote:

"The tycoon is in fine whack.... He is managing this war, the draft and foreign relations, and planning a reconstruction of the Union all at once.

"I never knew with what a tyrannous authority he ruled the cabinet until now. The most important thing he decides, and there is no cavil."

Abe Brooked No Opposition

There is a story that after Lincoln and members of his cabinet had taken a vote on an important question of policy he said: "One aye and six nays. The ayes have it."

Northern Democrats assailed him for not being conciliatory enough toward the southern states. Republicans in Congress bitterly denounced him for not being more ruthless with secessionists.

But he remained in supreme control of the war effort, making and unmaking generals, until the south gave up. The only test he applied to a general was whether he could and would defeat the Confederates.

Although Lincoln greatly admired Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's ability, he didn't hesitate to tell him off. In the winter of 1864-'65, Grant reported that Confederate Gen. R. E. Lee had proposed a conference with him (Grant) with the view of taking steps to settle war issues.

Lincoln dictated the following reply, signed by Secretary Stanton:

"The President directs me to say to you that he wishes you to have no conference with General Lee unless it be for the capitulation of General Lee's army or on some minor and merely military matter.

"He instructs me to say to you that you are not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political question. Such questions the President holds in his own hands and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions."



Lincoln Lore

November, 1977

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Number 1677

Nathaniel W. Stephenson and the Progressive Lincoln

As new Lincoln books come off the presses each year, there is a tendency to shove the older biographies of Lincoln into darker and more inaccessible corners of the bookshelves. Each generation of Lincoln students has a hazier recognition than the preceding one of the contributions of early Lincoln biographers and historians. It is foolish to bemoan a process that is inevitable and, in fact, a sign that the field still thrives and produces fresh literature.

Still, there is something about the Lincoln literature which makes the field resist periodic checks of the historical pulse. About every ten years or so, a scholar writes an article to tell us what has happened in the field which deals with the Age of Jackson. No such periodic body of historiographical literature exists for Lincoln and none appears to be on the horizon. There are Paul Angle's *Shelf of Lincoln Books*, Benjamin Thomas's *Portrait for Posterity*, and Roy Basler's *Lincoln Legend*. And David Potter gave an interesting lecture at Oxford University in 1948 which discussed "The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography." Don Fehrenbacher made a similar attempt at Oxford in 1968 with "The Changing Image of Lincoln in American Historiography." Yet, there does not seem to exist an impulse for comprehensiveness and subtlety. The reason is simple enough; the literature is so vast that it would take a large part of a lifetime to do a thorough job.

This problem is also an opportunity, however. With a literature so vast, one can find numerous works on Lincoln in almost every era. One figure, then, can provide a barometer for the spirit of every age and make comparisons easy and just. A good example is provided by the work of Nathaniel W. Stephenson in the Progressive Era.

Stephenson, as Fehrenbacher points out, was the first academic historian to write a biography of Lincoln and, at the time of Fehrenbacher's lecture (1968), one of only two academics ever to do so. The viewpoint he brought to

the Lincoln field merits study.

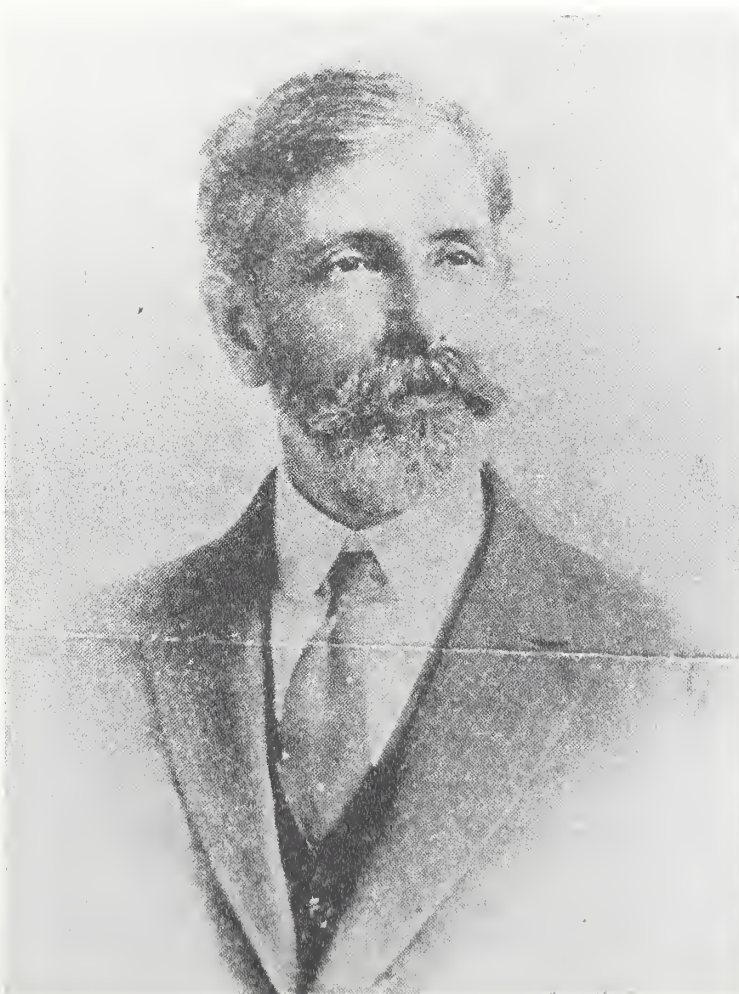
Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1867, Stephenson received undergraduate training at Indiana University and worked as a newspaper man. For more than twenty years, he was Professor of History at the College of Charleston. Later he taught briefly at Yale and Columbia, became editor of the *Chronicles of America* series, and ended his career at Scripps College in Claremont, California.

In the period from 1918 to 1922, Stephenson published a book on the Confederacy, two on Lincoln, and one on the Mexican War. It is this period in Stephenson's career which most interests Lincoln students, and a key to Stephenson's views can be found in an article he wrote on Lincoln in 1919, in the midst of this period of great scholarly activity.

Stephenson's "Lincoln and the Progress of Nationality in the North," published in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1919*, was a perfect epitome of the Progressive mind. The image of Lincoln presented there revealed much more about Stephenson and his era than about Lincoln and the Civil War.

Stephenson's major focus in the piece was on the impediments on the home front to Lincoln's successful prosecution of the war effort. Written in the wake of World War I, this article revealed Stephenson's preoccupation with the recent war effort. He identified "the sharply separatist impulses of four groups of people, each too conscious of its own standard type to be fully conscious of the Nation as a whole." He called them "the rhetorical visionaries represented by the [Knights of the] Golden Circle; the fanatics represented by Greeley; the parasites, represented then as now by the profiteers; [and] the labor group, whose activity was obscure and can not be typified by any one familiar figure."

Stephenson seemed less interested in the greatest impediment to nationality in Lincoln's day, the secessionists. In fact, he granted them an heroic (if anach-



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Nathaniel W. Stephenson.

ronistic) status which he refused the enemies on the home front. It was not fair, he said, to confuse the latter "with the actual secessionists, those who flung themselves against the front of destiny, sword in hand." By contrast, the advocates of peace in the North simply "lacked character. . . . Though they seem to have intrigued with the Confederacy, and pretty certainly formed part of the inspiration of Morgan's raid through Indiana and Ohio, they were very careful, when their mood of dreamy speculation had brought them in sight of danger, to make haste to establish an alibi. Not for them the courage of the real enthusiast." Instead of the Copperhead, "Their badge ought to have been the white feather."

The Sons of Liberty lacked not only courage but also intelligence. Stephenson went to great lengths to ridicule Lincoln's enemies in the peace movement, particularly for their propensity to dote "upon that vile form of rhetoric which for certain types of visionary will always be the fulmination of Jupiter." It was impossible "to take seriously . . . men of such vague mentality" that they would swear to "this farcical oath":

I do further solemnly promise and swear that I will ever cherish the sublime lessons which the sacred emblems of our order suggest, and will so far as in me lies impart those lessons to the people of the earth, where the mystic acorn falls from its parent bough, in whose visible firmament [sic] Orion, Arcturus, and the Pleiades ride in their cold resplendent glories, where the Southern Cross dazzles the eyes of degraded humanity with its coruscations of golden light, etc.

Stephenson was inclined to interpret this opposition not as a stand on principles, however wrongheaded, but as the product of a disordered psychology. "Surely," Stephenson argued,

the more we study the event the more we tend toward this conclusion: An impediment to nationalism these men were; but their psychology and that of the real secessionists were widely different. And it is worth remembering that there was a corresponding group in the Confederacy with the same impracticable ideas, the same joy in decadent rhetoric, the same lack of genuine imagination, the same passion for riding the off-horse. The type was common to America. It would have obstructed the formation of a southern nation quite as wilfully as it aimed to obstruct the northern. And is not the type familiar still? Here is a problem of temperament, of psychological history, not of constitutional. In this place, with a paper limited to 20 minutes, the short cut to one's conclusion is all that is possible. But is it a dizzying transition to skip the intervening steps and land upon the conclusion that the orders of the white feather help us to understand the dreaming pacifists of our own day? Can we not imagine certain distinguished gentlemen, and some even more distinguished ladies, taking the oath of the Pleiades in perfect seriousness?

Not all "impediments to nationalism" were fuzzy-thinking dreamers. The war profiteers "had clearer views of life." "You remember those two documents," Stephenson said, "which figure to-day in damning juxtaposition in Volume 122 of the Official Records, — that pathetic report of the quartermaster general describing the 'troops before the enemy . . . compelled to do picket duty in the late cold nights without overcoats, or even coats, wearing only the thin summer flannel blouses,' and along with this report, the formal protest of the committee of the Boston Board of Trade against the purchase in Europe of clothing for the Army. Even the profiteering of the World War can not beat that!" Stephenson found apt use for a passage from Lincoln's letter of June 29, 1863, to William Kellogg, "Few things are so troublesome to the government as the fierceness with which the profits of trading in cotton [sic] are sought."

The existence of the third group Stephenson attributed to the inadequate nationalization even of the North before the Civil War. These men, the likes of Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, John Greenleaf Whittier, the Cleveland convention which tried to run John C. Frémont against Lincoln in 1864, were antisectionists but critics of Lincoln. These "gentle dreamers" were "another obstacle to nationality, different from the moral quicksand of the secret societies, different also from the antisocial predatory consciousness of the profiteers." Stephenson dodged saying precisely what their problem was and relied on phrases like "exaggerations of individualism" and "emotional individualism gone mad" to charac-

terize them as nearly as he could.

With nationalization so obviously incomplete in the North, it was to be Lincoln's colossal task to develop American nationality. "Therefore, his views on his own role, on the function of his office, are so intensely interesting," Stephenson urged. Lincoln's view of American nationality, gleaned by Stephenson "from certain crucial events and from a relatively small number of utterances" rather than from any "general statement of his views on any of these points," retained federalism. There would be no obliteration of traditional state boundaries. "Secondly," Stephenson said, "Lincoln conceived our National Union as preeminently a people's government." "Whether we like it or not," Stephenson added, "we must see Lincoln as a statesman of the masses." Stephenson mustered a now familiar battery of quotations to make his case. In his speech in Cincinnati on February 12, 1861, Lincoln said, "the working men are the basis of all governments." In 1864, he stated with what Stephenson called "startling explicitness" that "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

These were "radical utterances," and Stephenson hastened to "qualify them by the limitations imposed by related utterances." Lincoln "excluded aristocracy from his political vision," but "he also excluded the political science of fairyland." There was, in short, nothing of inspiration for socialists in him, and Stephenson carefully balanced the "radical" quotations with this one:

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside the family relation, should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds. Nor should this lead to a war upon property or the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable, is a positive good to the world. That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example insuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built.

Only here did Stephenson mention the fourth great impediment to nationality in the North, labor. He seemed to be saying, not that labor had been assertive of its narrow demands, but that one who, like Lincoln, was sympathetic to labor could have gone too far — but did not.

Quite apart from his answers to the threats on the home front, there were other important aspects of Lincoln's nationalism which helped to lead America properly to her great national status. One was "his attitude toward the source and mode of political authority." Stephenson found Lincoln's approach to this problem analogous to his approach to labor. He was certainly a man of the people but not necessarily a slave to the people's every whim: "Lincoln was not a friend of the plebiscite or of the referendum; on the contrary, he was a staunch believer in representative government in the strict sense." Here, Stephenson found Lincoln's constitutional latitudinarianism instructive. Lincoln issued a "challenge to the country when refusing to yield to the clamor over military arrests," defended "the right of the President to assume in emergency vast authority," and explained to the people that if a President, "uses the power justly, the . . . people will probably justify him; if he abuses it, he is in their hands to be dealt with by all the modes they have reserved to themselves in the Constitution." Stephenson was not interested in the constitutional point: ". . . what is more to the point is Lincoln's refusal in various matters not involving his military authority to make any attempt to find out the popular will; likewise his frequent disregard of the nearest approach he had to a plebiscite — the opinion of the majority of the House of Representatives." Stephenson admired "the boldness with which he planted himself on the idea of delegated authority."

He refused to be the mere spokesman of the people. He was in his own mind their representative, on whom, for a time, certain powers had been bestowed. For that time these powers were his. Horribly reactionary, the Bolshevik would say. In a way, yes. So reactionary, in a way, that there does not exist, probably, as a summary of Lincoln's basal attitude toward his own electorate, a better statement of fundamental theory than that immortal letter to the electors of Bristol signed by Edmund Burke.

Finally, Lincoln's conception of the nation was notable for its sense of place. "It has been pointed out," Stephenson said, that most American reasoning about nationality is in terms of people. On this fact is grounded, I am told, a distinction between the poetry inspired in America by the World War and that of England. The American poets attach their loyalty to the group of people, their countrymen. The British poets, while having that, have also something more — a sense of the soil, a loyalty to the very earth, our mother. Lincoln in his vision of nationality had outstripped his time and had the British point of view.

As proof, Stephenson, who had excellent command of the corpus of Lincoln's writings, could cite these words from the second annual message of December, 1862: "A nation may be said to consist of its territory, its people, and its laws. The territory is the only part which is of certain durability. 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever.' It is of the first importance to duly consider, and estimate, this ever-enduring part."

It seems worthwhile to quote Stephenson at such great length, because an appreciation for the tone and texture of his writing on Lincoln is important to understand the nature of his interpretation of the Sixteenth President. Though not altogether ignored, Stephenson's place in Lincoln historiography has not received the attention it deserves. Richard Current showed an appreciation for Stephenson's work in the "Bibliographical Essay" at the end of *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*:

A couple of widely read one-volume lives are Lord Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln* (1917) and Nathaniel W. Stephenson's *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life, Especially of Its Springs of Action as Revealed and Deepened by the Ordeal of War* (1922). [Benjamin] Thomas, in *Portrait for Posterity*, does not deign to discuss the Stephenson book, but [Roy P.] Basler gives it considerable attention in *The Lincoln Legend*, concluding: "Sandburg combined with Stephenson may be recognized as the best version of the private Lincoln; Charnwood, perhaps, has the best of the public Lincoln."

Basler appreciated Stephenson for his ability to capture Lincoln's "poetic" nature and for his assertion that Lincoln was no mere political opportunist but a man of stern will and inflexible purpose. David Potter in "The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography" gave Stephenson a rather different niche in the annals of Lincoln biography:

At a time when Freudian interpretations were freely dispensed by everyone who had acquired a smattering of Freud's terminology, Nathaniel W. Stephenson garnished his *Lincoln, An Account of His Personal Life*, with psychoanalytical speculation. It must be added, in fairness, however, that Stephenson was also one of the first writers to attempt an appraisal of the meaning of Lincoln's preservation of the Union. To Stephenson, present and future developments constantly reveal new meanings in past events. Thus, Lincoln's preservation of the Union acquired new significance as the unfolding of world events revealed the increasing importance of the American republic in the history of the twentieth century. Asserting that the United States had become "the most powerful and probably the most distinctive country in the world," Stephenson suggested that

because we are what we are, the world during the next chapter of its history will be what it will be. If the result should prove unfortunate, then Lincoln's achievement was in the nature of a tragic victory. If the outcome should prove beneficent, then Lincoln's achievement is one of the greatest in history. But whatever the eventual result, the enormous significance is not to be questioned. The statesman who determined the course of American development, who guided the Republic past its turning point, is one of the prime factors of modern experience. His work contributed to establishing a new balance of power among the social forces in his country. Out of this has resulted a new balance among the social forces of the world.

Although Stephenson could not foresee Hitler or Stalin, Lake Success or Hiroshima, the Truman Doctrine or the Marshall Plan, his analysis seems today [1948] more cogent than ever.

Potter came very near the mark but did not quite hit it. Certainly, nationalism was a major preoccupation in Stephen-

son's work — but why? The answer is that, like Freudianism, it was a major preoccupation of the age. In fact, if we call his age the Progressive Era, we could say that Progressivism was a form of nationalism. There are, as David Potter himself told us in "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," many different kinds of nationalism. Nationalism is never really the love of the whole nation, but rather it is the love of a particular part of the nation with which the nationalist identifies. It is always a love of a particular ideal of nationhood.

Stephenson shared a particular ideal with many of the thinkers of his era, and this ideal explains the aspects of Lincoln's life he chose to emphasize. Progressivism, in its most familiar guise, wanted to see the government discipline private enterprise for the good of the whole. This preoccupation of the age led Stephenson to emphasize the impediment to nationality represented by the Boston Board of Trade. To quote Lincoln's remark about the rapaciousness of the dealers in contraband cotton does not give the same impression that stress on the administration's appointment of banker Hugh McCulloch as Secretary of Treasury would give or stress on their method of funding the war by relying on the private broker, Jay Cooke, would give. Stephenson's stress on Lincoln as a man of the people and as a man sympathetic to labor was the other side of the same coin. Progressives championed labor but not to the extent socialists did.

A bit less obvious, but still a part of the mind of the same age, was Stephenson's admiration of Lincoln's alleged scorn for plebiscites and referenda. A part of the reform movement of Stephenson's era championed such democratic processes, but the major impulse of the age ran quite the other way towards elitism. It was the first era of the expert, the heyday of the social scientist and "scientific" legislation. Experts know what the people need even when the people themselves do not, and the political ideal of the Progressive Era was a representative government, periodically checked by the people's will, and not a plebiscitarian democracy. Woodrow Wilson's views were good examples of this. He complained that Congress was "a body whose organization makes it disintegrate — only the nation in miniature." For a democrat, it would be ideal to make legislatures perfectly representative microcosms of the nation as a whole. Wilson, by contrast, was disappointed that Congress had achieved only that status. "The state," he admonished, "must have an individuality and oneness of its own which is not simply the aggregate or compromise resultant of the individualities of all concerned in its gov[ernment]." He looked for a government "formed by the concert and prevalence of commanding minds, not commanding numbers. Persuaded, not commanding, numbers." The government should command and not obey the people. Wilson was a great admirer of Edmund Burke.

Stephenson's appreciation for Lincoln's sternness and apparent willingness to arrogate wide discretionary powers to himself as President stemmed from the same ideal of government. It was doubtless reinforced by the recent experience of World War I, which had seen a stern President Wilson beleaguered by opponents of war just as Lincoln had been. Stephenson's identification with Wilson's plight is readily apparent in the contemptuous language with which Stephenson dealt with Lincoln's anti-war opposition. He pictured them as "disordered" misfits of "vague mentality," given to "decadent" rhetoric — and not unlike "the dreaming pacifists of our own day."

What makes Stephenson's work so interesting is the way in which it reveals the great assumption behind much Progressive Era thought, to wit, nationalism. Capital was criticized for pursuing its own self-interest at the expense of national strength. Labor could probably do the same thing, given the chance. Representation should not be thought of as a mere reflection of the popular will broken up into geographical constituencies and brought together again by proxy in Congress where the sum of individual wills would become the will of the whole. The nation was too organic a unity for that, and the representative, once elected, spoke and voted for the good of the whole; he did not act as the mere messenger for his constituents' narrow and peculiar interests. National unity was too perfectly organic to be divisible in parts. Stephenson was interested in "the Nation as a whole" and admired Lincoln's conception of "our Federal Union as an elaborately articulated but also an entirely interdependent community, psychologically one." Stephenson searched for the origins of

"that profound spiritual cohesion which transforms a horde into a nation."

This preoccupation with nationalism was as much an aspect of Progressivism as any impulse for any particular reform. The reforms, in fact, were supposed to make the nation strong; that was their purpose. Nationalism was Stephenson's preoccupation and it led the historian to devote an entire chapter to "The Mexican Episode" in his book, *Abraham Lincoln and the Union*, published two years later than the article analyzed here. In "Lincoln and the Progress of Nationality in the North," Stephenson had said: "... let the blind admirers of Lincoln remember that in some of the disagreements between himself and Congress — as for example the Mexican issue — it is not proved past doubting that Lincoln was right and Congress wrong." In the subsequent book, Stephenson argued "that Lincoln's course was very widely condemned as timid." He continued:

When we come to the political campaign of 1864, we shall meet Henry Winter Davis among his most relentless personal enemies. Dissatisfaction with Lincoln's Mexican policy has not been sufficiently considered in accounting for the opposition to him, inside the war party, in 1864. To it may be traced an article in the platform of the war party, adopted in June, 1864, protesting against the establishment of monarchy "in near proximity to the United States."

In the same month Maximilian entered Mexico City.

By contrast, William Frank Zornow's *Lincoln and the Party Divided*, the only book-length study of the election of 1864, does not so much as mention Mexico. Interest in flexing the national muscle in Latin America was part and parcel of the enlarged view of the role of the state so many Progressives held.

Another Lincoln biographer who was a contemporary of Stephenson's also found Lincoln's lack of interest in Mexico distressing; he was Albert Beveridge. Already at work on his important book on Lincoln, Beveridge gave Stephenson's book a favorable review — doubtless, in part, because he too was looking for the nationalist hero that Stephenson had found. In Beveridge's case, however, Lincoln's myopia in regard to Mexico was to cause a strange reversal of expectations. Beveridge found the early Lincoln more partisan than nationalist. It seemed that Lincoln did not dream of opposing the Mexican War until he went to Washington and was dazzled by the shining brilliance of the national Whig leadership, to a man, staunch opponents of the Mexican War. William Herndon's attempts to dissuade his senior partner from his course of opposition to the war served merely to prove that Herndon was almost always correct and a great driving force behind Lincoln's later greatness.

Arthur C. Cole, reviewing Stephenson's *Lincoln* for the *American Historical Review* in 1923, shrewdly noted that "the breadth and depth of Lincoln's soul come out effectively; if he becomes less the 'great Emancipator,' he becomes more the 'great Conciliator.'" Cole astutely found Stephenson "unfortunately ignoring the Mexican War stand" of Lincoln. Only thus, one might say, could Stephenson make his portrait of Lincoln a unified one. This unity fell apart in Beveridge's hands; a more thorough biographer, he knew that the Mexican War episode was not ignorable. As a result, Beveridge could not find the great conciliator, to use Cole's phrase, that he sought — or at least he could not find him in Lincoln. Rather, Stephen Douglas began to crowd Lincoln off Beveridge's canvass as he painted the great conflicts over slavery in the 1850s. A reviewer of Stephenson's *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* had noted a similar tendency in that man's work. "Mr. Stephenson," wrote a reviewer for the *Catholic World* in 1919, "correctly appreciates the great Democratic leader Douglas . . . Douglas' declaration to the copperheads should be emblazoned: 'There can be no neutrals in this war; only patriots or traitors.'"

The reviewer for the *Catholic World* noted another trait in Stephenson's writing:

With capitalists he has little sympathy whether of the Southern type which Helper's *Impending Crisis* (with which he is impressed) condemns so heartily, or of the Northern class, whom he charges with looking at the whole issue from the point of view of profits and endangered Southern trade and investments. Cameron, Belmont, Frémont and the Cincinnati ironmongers, he castigates for their shameless profiteering and their contract frauds equally with the bankers who failed to float loans save at

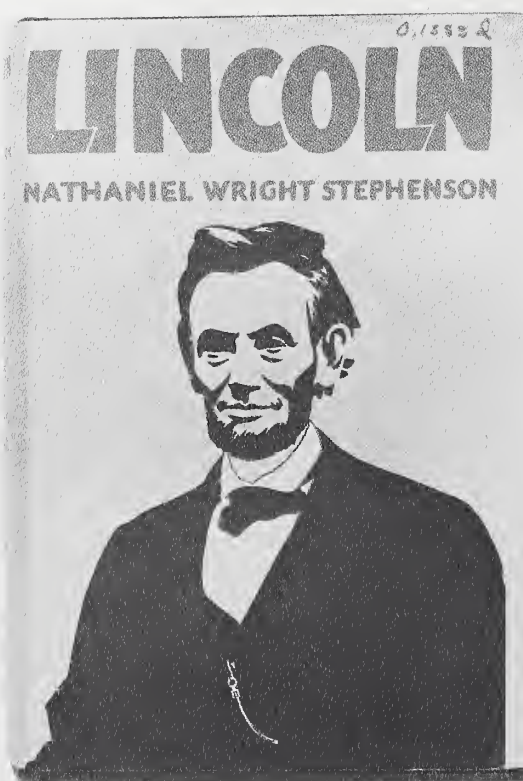
recklessly high interest and heavy discounts. There is something of the radical and a little of the iconoclast in the writer.

Beveridge would alter this Progressive strain in Lincoln writing as well. "Lincoln's whole attitude and conduct in the Bank controversy," said Beveridge, "were strongly conservative and in firm support of vested interests and the conduct of business, unmolested as far as possible, by legislative or any kind of governmental interference."

Nationalism dictated an obvious stance towards Reconstruction: any group which impeded speedy reconciliation of the States was bad. Probably Stephenson's longest-lasting legacy was his use of the term "vindictives" to describe Lincoln's enemies within the Republican party. This was new enough to provoke critical responses from more than one reviewer. *The American Historical Review* noted *Abraham Lincoln and the Union* briefly in 1920, and the reviewer said: "It seems . . . that the opponents of the President are too severely dealt with when they are labelled 'the vindictives.' The term is used cleverly and it serves to heighten the light on Lincoln, by way of contrast; but it is hardly just to men who were convinced that they were right. In the game of politics it is never safe to give all the integrity to one side and all the discredit to the other." Cole called attention to the same phenomenon in 1923 in reviewing *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life*:

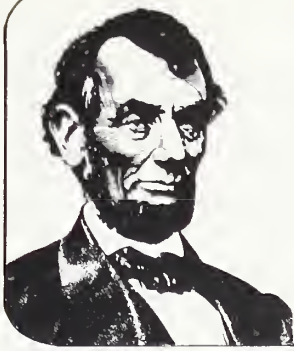
The bulk of the volume is given over to the struggle between President Lincoln and "the Jacobin Club," as he calls the Republican "vindictives," after John Hay. It is skillfully and dramatically portrayed. One sees, perhaps, too much of the hero in Lincoln and the villain in his critics; at such times the narrative is hardly fair to the radical Republicans . . . One gets, too, the impression that Lincoln was putting all his energies into efforts to thwart the "Jacobins."

Stephenson's legacy was mixed. Some of his ideas were quickly modified by Beveridge's massive and careful work. Others had a much longer life. In any case, he did leave a legacy to Lincoln biographers, and it deserves to be understood and appreciated.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. First edition of Nathaniel W. Stephenson's *Lincoln: An Account of His Personal Life, Especially of Its Springs of Action as Revealed and Deepened by the Ordeal of War*. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922) in dust jacket.



Lincoln Lore

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PUTTING LINCOLN BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

In the first generation of scholarship on Lincoln, his life fell apart in his biographers' hands, and a century of diligent effort failed to put it back together again. The early writers, men like Ward Hill Lamon and William Henry Herndon who had known Lincoln personally, were puzzled by the career of an obscure prairie politician who suddenly became America's greatest President. His life seemed to fall into two parts, an early and rather uninspiring period of local partisan warfare followed by a late and most inspiring period of statesmanship. The only way to tie the two together was to say that Lincoln grew. Generally, they found a Lincoln diamond emerging late in life from a frontier dunghill. Only the vague idea of

growth stood between Lincoln students and a hopelessly fractured subject.

Later scholarship tended to accelerate the trend toward stressing Lincoln's capacity for growth as the key to his career. This is especially true of the last decade, when liberal historians felt it necessary to explain away Lincoln's views on race as expressed early in his life by pointing at his amazing capacity for growth in office. Stress on growth became, ironically, a rigid orthodoxy among writers interpreting the life of the Sixteenth President.

G. S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, published this month by Memphis State University



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. President Lincoln appears oblivious to the economic workings of his administration, as the government grinds out greenbacks for greedy war contractors. The cartoonist could not have misinterpreted his subject more. G.S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* shows that Lincoln took a keen interest in economic questions all his life.

Press, puts Lincoln back together again more successfully than any previous effort. By any criterion of judgment, it is a superb book, as full of insights for the reader already steeped in Lincoln literature as for the reader who chooses it as his first serious book on the Sixteenth President. If it does not win the Pulitzer Prize for biography, then the selection committee will have a great deal of explaining to do. Through patient scholarship and wise avoidance of voguish or trendy interpretations, Professor Boritt's work grew from a careful monograph (a dissertation written at Boston University a decade ago) into a well-considered but broad interpretation of Lincoln's life and mind. It is a book which can be ignored by no one seeking any kind of firm knowledge of Abraham Lincoln.

Boritt solves the problem that has plagued Lincoln scholars for a century simply by saying that Lincoln did not grow. Oh, to be sure, he learned a lot as he went along, but the diamond was there from earliest maturity, and it required little burnishing to give it character and brilliance. Why did biographers fail to recognize the quality of the Lincoln diamond as revealed in his early career? Because, says Boritt, Lincoln's brilliance shone early mainly in the realm of political economy, and that is not the arena in which heroes are made. Throughout his mature life, Lincoln had essentially an economic vision. And the word vision (or dream, to use Boritt's phrase) is appropriate in every respect. It was truly a dream or myth, sufficiently rooted in American realities to make it practical but also sufficiently prophetic to inspire the effort that made much of it come true. Much more so than anyone has ever realized before, the dream contradicted Thomas Jefferson's dream, the other heroic vision which has affected Americans with everything from distrust of cities to a love of large backyards as symbols of a yeoman's independence.

As brilliantly independent as Boritt's work is, I feel quite certain that it would have been impossible had Marvin Meyers not written *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957). Meyers corrected a grave error in our interpretations of the Age of Jackson, which was also the formative age of Abraham Lincoln. Before his book, American historians saw in the Democratic party of Andrew Jackson the wave of the future, the harbinger of modern American society with its progressive economic ideas and its interest in the common man. Meyers saw in Jackson's party a very different undercurrent of longing for an older, Jeffersonian, pastoral America. The true harbingers of "progress," if by that term is meant the urban, industrial society of finance capitalism and social mobility, were the Whigs.

Boritt argues convincingly that Lincoln's was a Whig mind (in Meyer's sense). Indeed, it is his contention that Lincoln was always a Whig. After the demise of that unfortunate party, Lincoln became a Whig in Republican clothing — not in the sense that he proscribed Democrats who joined the Republican party, but in the sense that he always thought as a Whig would think.

Boritt would be the last to say that Lincoln was a slavish adherent of the Whig party line. In fact, it considerably pains him to find so many writers (among them, I fear, this reviewer on occasion) who have interpreted Lincoln's Whig years as years of narrow or unthinking party allegiance. To interpret Lincoln in such a way is to fall back into the old dichotomy that has always fragmented the life of Abraham Lincoln; it forces repetition of the tired and weak idea that a politician of limited vision was reborn in the slavery controversy as an idealistic leader and statesman. Boritt argues that Lincoln's mind was a Whig mind, but it was also a principled mind. He did not embrace the platform of Henry Clay because it was the route to political advancement; he embraced it because it was what underdeveloped Illinois needed. No common man had a chance to rise in life if the economic system was so primitive that there was no opportunity to make a better living. Canals, turnpikes, and railroads were valued as avenues to social rather than geographical mobility.

Although Lincoln's mind tended more often than not to arrive at a vision of Illinois's economic needs that was congruent with Whig party doctrines, this was not always so. As early as 1835, Lincoln broke with his Whig mentor John Todd Stuart over the issue of supporting a state bank when the Bank of the United States was impossible to salvage. If many

were to rise in Illinois, Lincoln knew, banks of some kind were a necessity. Lincoln, Boritt shrewdly points out, almost never agreed with "any of the noneconomic principles of his party." He knew the value of political organization (which most Whigs did not), and he never shared the Whigs' disdain for Catholic and foreign-born Americans. He stood only for that part of the Whig platform that he believed in; Lincoln's was an independent and principled mind.

Lincoln's principled actions stood out among his peers. For example, the Panic of 1837 made Illinois's grandiose internal improvements system economically unfeasible and, later, politically unpopular. Bipartisan enthusiasm had erected the system, and it was abandoned in bipartisan terror. Democrat Stephen Douglas, an early supporter, and Lincoln's Whig allies John J. Hardin and Edward D. Baker criticized the system when it was doomed. Lincoln persisted in its defense to the bitter end and may have paid for it with a reduced reputation within his own party. If anything, Lincoln was too idealistic rather than too political in his early career.

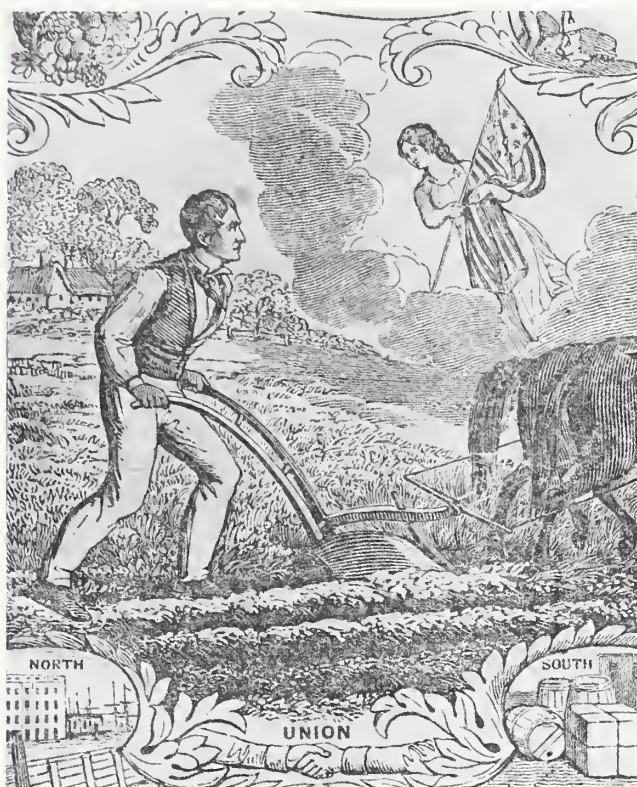
Thus we see one element which allows Boritt to tie this fragmented life together: he is willing to look at the Whig years on their own terms and not with a sneering disdain. Surely it is not hard to believe that the rise of the common man would have been facilitated more by canals, railroads, banks, and industry than by the hardscrabble rural economic conditions Lincoln had seen in his formative years in Indiana. There was statesmanship in the Whig program.

The second element in making Lincoln whole again is Boritt's realization that Lincoln clung to the vision all his political life. The Republican party, of course, was, as David Davis termed it, a "confederated" party, a loose and uneasy amalgam of former Whigs and former Democrats. It exacted from its former-Whig standard-bearer, Lincoln, a practical suppression of those economic issues so symbolic of Whiggery and so galling to former Democrats. Yet Lincoln did not



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 2. William Henry Harrison strikes a Napoleonic pose in this woodcut from a campaign biography published by Jesper Harding in Philadelphia in 1840. The Whigs at last had found a general to match Jackson.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. In America, Napoleonic generals would not do; therefore, Harrison became a Cincinnatus, returning to the plow as soon as the battle was over. His attire seems a bit formal for field work.

abandon his principles for his new party. As it turned out, he could have his cake and eat it too, for the Republican Congress during his Presidency, no longer stalled by a hostile Executive, enacted many of the old Whig programs without Lincoln's having to lift a finger. Wars always require a nationalizing economic program.

The circumstances of Lincoln's change from Whig to Republican allegiance, of course, are not exhausted by explaining the convenient coincidences of Lincoln's private views, national necessity, and a shift in party power in Washington, D.C. A continuing thread of principle stitched that great life together. In the 1850s, Lincoln, who tended to be a one-issue man all his life, perceived slavery's expansion as the greatest threat to the American dream of social mobility, and he moved to meet it. Note that this was not simply a matter of seeing the Slave Power's Congressmen as threats to tariff legislation. It was a far profounder fear that the political assumptions necessary to justify a thriving slave system necessarily degraded the common man's "right to rise," the heart of Lincoln's dream. Besides, the specific Whig policies — the Bank, the tariff, internal improvements — which Lincoln thought necessary to create economic opportunity were politically dead, long since abandoned by Whigs less principled than Lincoln. It was a time for fighting battles over the most fundamental assumptions.

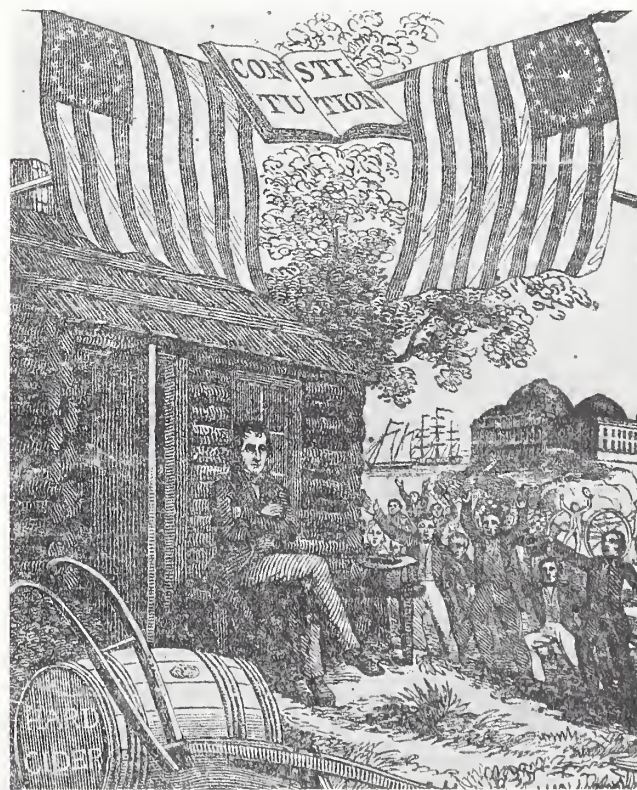
This hasty and impressionistic summary of the central theme of *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* fails to suggest the intricate web of meticulous scholarship which proves the point. The only way to render that in the short space available is to offer a sampling of some of the detailed insights that mark every chapter of the book.

Lincoln's nationalism, for example, has been repeatedly praised and endlessly invoked as an explanation of his policies, but it has been little analyzed, especially in his early career. Boritt makes a giant step forward when he notes carefully the role of the history of the internal improvements system in Illinois in structuring Lincoln's nationalism. Localism doomed the system from the start by exacting from its promoters some direct and tangible benefit, a railroad terminus

or a cash subsidy, for every locality. The result was an over-expanded scheme which had to be built everywhere at once. When it failed in the 1840s, the failure "helped make Lincoln a lifelong opponent of the localism and sectionalism that had proved so destructive in Illinois." He would see secession in the light of this experience, telling Congress when it convened on July 4, 1861: "This relative matter of National power, and state rights, as a principle, is no other than the principle of *generality*, and *locality*." Over-generous sops to local Southern interests could make the national edifice topple.

Other examples abound. In the realm of constitutional thought, for example, some Whigs, despite the fact that their party took its name from the great English party that championed constitutional limits to monarchical tyranny, took a notoriously cavalier attitude toward constitutions. This was one aspect of noneconomic Whiggery which Lincoln shared with the giants of his party. He loathed constitutional wrangles and justified the Bank of the United States as something "necessary and proper" under the vaguely elastic general welfare clause. Here he parted ways from that temporary Whig but permanent constitutionalist, John C. Calhoun, "who based his support for the Bank on its monetary function and on the constitutional right of Congress to regulate the currency." Later, there was reason aplenty, despite Lincoln's carefully soothing assertions of having no designs on slavery where it already existed, for Southerners to be scared to death by Lincoln. If the general welfare clause could justify a bank, it might justify an attack on slavery. "We think slavery impairs, and endangers the general welfare," said Republican Lincoln, and he was still Whiggish enough in his thinking to make that statement ominous.

Lincoln clung to a principled Whiggery far longer than most Whigs. By 1840, the Whigs had caught on to the great Democratic strategy for winning elections: ideas do not win; popular generals suffice very nicely. The party rushed to embrace William Henry Harrison, "General Mum," who stood for nothing. Most Whigs stood staunchly beside him on the same platform. Whig Lincoln "decided to stake a full year's



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. In this campaign woodcut the people clamor for a reticent Harrison, willing to sit simply by his log cabin with his cider barrel. The wealthy Harrison lived in a mansion.

campaigning on the question of national banking." He was deeply committed to a partisan issue, banking, but it was for the sake of the issue and not partisanship; the other Whigs were not saying a mumbling word about banking in 1840. Moreover, the corny nostalgia of the Harrison Log Cabin campaign left this refugee from a real log cabin cold; he had not fought "with trees and logs and grubs" until he was an adult in order to return to a log cabin.

On Lincoln's famous relationship with Henry Clay, we learn again that Lincoln liked the Kentucky Senator for his principles. From Henry Clay, Lincoln learned not only the American System but also a particularly non-silk-stocking version of Whiggery. Lincoln remained a friend of labor throughout his life. More rarely than most Republicans did Lincoln tend to gloss over class differences in the North by juxtaposing an ideal, monolithic "free labor system" against slavery in the South. Lincoln was somewhat different from Clay (and other old Whigs as well) in the candor of his appeal to, let us be blunt, avarice. The old Whigs had said that tariffs and internal improvements were means to the end of military might and real national independence. Lincoln said they were necessary to allow the common man to improve his station in life. He did not share Clay's orientation to the East and had trouble with Whig land policies. And when Clay began to relax his grip on Whig principles for the sake of his Presidential ambitions in the 1840s, Lincoln appears to have drifted away from Clay.

When Lincoln abandoned Clay for Zachary Taylor in 1848, he gave a speech against Taylor's opponent, Lewis Cass, which was hilarious, but it was also, in all honesty, a low piece of stump speaking. Boritt's interpretation of the place of this speech in Lincoln's works is astute: "... what is most noteworthy about this, in so many ways uncharacteristic speech (the weakest in substance up to this point in the surviving Lincoln corpus), [is] that many later scholars took it as a display of the quintessential Lincoln before the slavery controversy." As he points out, it is one of the best-known of the early speeches because it contributes to the myth of Lincoln's having been a narrow partisan politician before the slavery controversy.

Lincoln's propensity for thinking in terms of progressive economics lay behind his rejection of the idea that there was a natural geographical limit to slave expansion. He had always believed that man could make the desert bloom, just as America had already proven to England that her seeming economic desert could bloom with industry and a thriving economy.

Lincoln's Whig mind had startling effects on his Presidential policies. He tended to think that avarice could help bring the Union back together. He therefore held out the possibility of assuming the Confederate debt and of compensating slave owners for emancipation long after other Republicans had abandoned such ideas. In fact, Lincoln's famed "plan of reconstruction," to the degree that he had one, was frankly and boldly economic. This penchant for economic schemes led Lincoln to a high tolerance for trading in Southern cotton during the war. The President felt almost to the end that gains in such trade undermined the political loyalties of cotton-rich Confederates.

Boritt accumulates a remarkable amount of evidence that indicates that Lincoln had an economic rather than a political understanding of democracy. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy," said Lincoln. For any political understanding of the idea, such a definition was absurd. The United States was the most democratic country on earth and one of the last bastions of slavery; Western Europe had no slavery and, for the most part, no democracy either.

As with all interpretations which bring unity where previously there was fragmentation and disarray, there are some aspects of the argument which strain credulity. For example, it comes as something of a shock to find the principled Lincoln going for Taylor in '48. In part, this is a failing of the author to supply a decent context of party history, so that the reader realizes the desperation with which Whigs longed for victory after so many lean years at the polls. In part, though, it is a function of having overdrawn the principled nature of Lincoln's previous career. This becomes a more serious problem when Boritt argues that Lincoln learned from this cam-

paign and adopted as his own the Whig idea that the President should be weak. Much of what Boritt says about Lincoln the President hinges on Lincoln's holding the Whig view of the Executive's role, and it is not plausible to think that Lincoln picked this idea up in a no-issue campaign in which Whigs badly claimed that Taylor's lack of platform was a function of his view that the President simply carried out the will of Congress, be that what it may. In other words, we are presented a principled man picking up a noneconomic principle from a party from which he usually takes only economic principles at a time when the party had, in a naked lust for office, chucked its principles and cloaked its abandonment of platform behind the principle adopted.

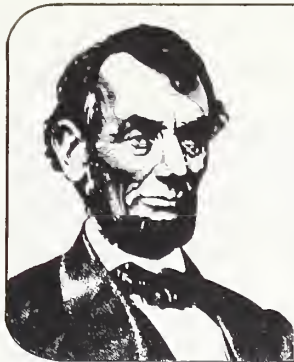
Perhaps it is only the startling newness of Boritt's interpretation, but I cannot help cringing at the flat statement that Lincoln "saw economic rights as more fundamental than political ones." Boritt uses this interpretation to explain President Lincoln's willingness "to make temporary sacrifices of certain *political* liberties — the right of *habeas corpus* for example." To ignore *all* the political content of Lincoln's political thought cannot but do violence to a proper understanding of the war years. It was no economic understanding of democracy which led Lincoln to hold the election of 1864, as scheduled, *and* to say: "... if the rebellion could force us to forego, or postpone a national election, it might fairly claim to have already conquered and ruined us." Here, as in several other places in the section on the Presidency, Professor Boritt goes overboard in his enthusiasm for this fresh interpretation.

But who can blame him? Weighed in the balance against his great accomplishment in this book, the faults are very slight indeed. In part, of course, this is due to a good mind at work. In part, it is a function of patience and diligence. Boritt has looked at things in collections ranging from the Massachusetts Historical Society to the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California. He has read manuscripts, newspapers, and secondary sources both seminal and obscure. And he has distilled it all into an elegantly written and tightly organized book — the best written on Lincoln in many, many years.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. In Zachary Taylor the Whigs found another popular general who made a platform of having no platform. He would not impose his will on the nation; he would simply carry out the will of Congress.



Lincoln Lore

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LINCOLN AND WASHBURNE

Though historians have praised President Lincoln's skilled handling of Congress, their discussions of the subject are usually confined to the Cabinet crisis of 1862 and to his abilities to handle difficult personalities like Charles Sumner's. The President's relations with the House of Representatives have been little explored. The tendency to think of Lincoln as a "Whig in the White House," to borrow the language of David Donald's famous essay on Lincoln's theory of the Presidency, reinforces the lack of interest in this question. The Whig theory of the Presidency, after all, dictated that the President simply enforce the will of Congress, use the veto sparingly, and — as Lincoln explained the theory in the election of 1848 — not even force a party platform on the country. A President following such a policy would not "handle" Congress at all. The best student of the Civil War Congress, Leonard P. Curry, concludes that Congress made considerable inroads on executive power during Lincoln's Presidency, though there was nothing like the achievement of Congressional dominance that would come in the Johnson years that followed the Civil War.

Whether this view of the decline of executive power *vis-a-vis* Congress in the Civil War years is true or not, its effect has been to stifle curiosity about Lincoln's friends in Congress. He did have friends there, and two notable examples were Isaac N. Arnold and Elihu B. Washburne. Arnold was not only a great partisan of Lincoln's cause but also an early Lincoln biographer. Yet it is almost impossible to find published material on this Illinois Congressman.

Elihu B. Washburne, if he had a less direct relationship with Lincoln than Arnold, had a longer and more significant career in Congress, and he was close enough to President Lincoln to merit considerable attention.

Washburne was born in Maine in 1816. He was named Elihu Benjamin Washburn but added an "e" to his last name in order to revert to what he thought was the proper spelling of the name among his English ancestors. This has caused some confusion because he had two brothers, Cadwallader and Israel Washburn, who also became prominent in American politics. Although they did not spell their last names identically, these three brothers became a powerful force in American politics. In fact, the Wash-

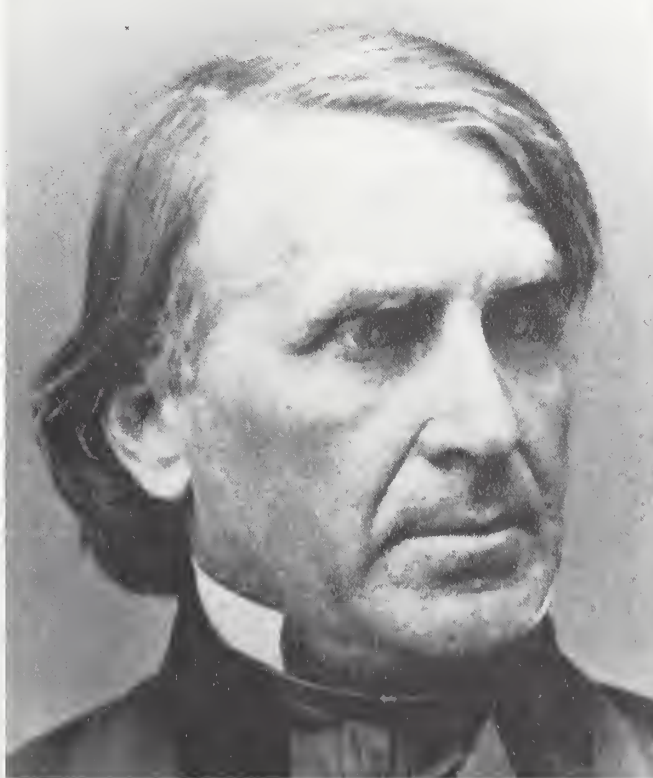
burns hold the distinction of being the only family to have three brothers in the same Congress representing three different states.

After various attempts to find a career, Washburne attended the Harvard Law School, became a member of the Massachusetts bar, and moved to the Illinois lead-mining boomtown of Galena in 1840. A Henry Clay Whig, Washburne met Lincoln the very year he moved to Galena. It was the year of the great log cabin campaign for William Henry Harrison. Their closest association, however, came at the time of the formation of the Republican party and after.

Washburne was elected to the first of eight consecutive terms in the United States House of Representatives in 1852. He was then still a Whig, but he was among the earliest converts to the Republican cause. As early as November of 1854, he could boast to Lincoln that every representative and senator sent to the state legislature from his northern Illinois district was a Republican, and this was almost two years before Lincoln would embrace that new party label. Washburne shared with Lincoln an animosity to the Know-Nothing party, which was at the time the principal competitor of the

Republicans for anti-Democratic voters. In 1854, for example, he helped carry an amendment to the homestead law which allowed those aliens who had declared their intention to become American citizens to acquire public lands in the same way full-fledged citizens did.

Washburne was a staunch supporter of Lincoln's drive to win a seat in the United States Senate in 1855. He and his friends saw every member of the state legislature from his district (the state legislatures still chose the United States Senators), and he told Lincoln how each man was leaning. He warned the candidate: "We are pretty ultra on the slave question . . . and you will have to take pretty high ground." Washburne worked to gain Free Soil support for Lincoln. He suggested that Lincoln write a letter describing his positions on the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, the admission of new slave states, and other aspects of the great slavery question which Washburne thought would override all others. He offered to show the letter to Salmon Chase and to get Chase to write Free Soilers in Illinois



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FIGURE 1. Elihu B. Washburne.

on Lincoln's behalf. Washburne himself saw Joshua Giddings, found him to be Lincoln's "strongest possible friend," and reported Giddings's willingness to "walk clear to Illinois to elect" Lincoln. Giddings wrote Illinois's most successful radical antislavery politician, Owen Lovejoy, twice to urge support for Lincoln's candidacy.

Washburne was an experienced politician, and, when he saw trouble brewing, he reported it. He told Lincoln of one influential friend in his district who opposed Lincoln's candidacy because Springfield's political influence had always been used against the interests of the northern part of the state. Thus an astonished Lincoln had to deal with the perennial sectionalism that plagued Illinois politics. "For a Senator to be the impartial representative of his whole State," Lincoln thundered in his reply, "is so plain a duty, that I pledge myself to the observance of it without hesitation; but not without some mortification that any one should suspect me of an inclination to the contrary." For eight years a Representative of Sangamon County in the legislature, Lincoln, "in a conflict of interests between that and other counties," would have felt a "duty to stick to Old Sangamon," but he could not recall any such conflict with members from the northern part of the state. He could recollect only "co-operating on measures of policy." The Illinois-Michigan Canal "was then the great Northern measure, and it, from first to last, had our votes as readily as the votes of the North itself."

Washburne had the politician's gift for turning a man's trouble to party advantage. One member of the legislature, Wait Talcott, was "in the biggest kind of a lawsuit for an alleged infringement of a patent." Washburne advised Talcott's agent to seek Lincoln's services in the case. If Talcott did so, Washburne was sure it would "be a good pull on him" to support Lincoln for Senator.

Washburne's and Lincoln's efforts failed in 1855, of course, and in 1858, when Lincoln tried again to reach the Senate, Washburne was again in Lincoln's camp. But now there was a complicating factor. Although Washburne was an early and dedicated Republican, he felt keenly that the party was "not so large but what it will hold a few more." He supported Lincoln's candidacy, but he had expressed a hope that Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's opponent, might become a Republican. Douglas had broken with the Democratic Buchanan administration over Kansas policy, and Washburne for a time thought the break decisive for Douglas's future loyalties. Lincoln, on the other hand, was nervous about talk from Eastern Republicans that the party in Illinois ought to let Douglas retain his seat unopposed. He did not trust Douglas, and this strategy would squeeze Lincoln out of any hopes for a Senate seat. Rumors of Washburne's shaky position on the Senate contest made Lincoln's supporters anxious. On April 28, 1858, Washburne told William Herndon that he could not "see the wisdom of abusing" Douglas, "as matters stand now." Four days later he was writing Lincoln much the same thing, explaining, though, that he "had no idea of making him Senator or making him a leader." As for the "idea . . . industriously circulated in our State, that the republicans outside the State were wanting to sell us out in Illinois," Washburne assured Lincoln from his Washington vantage point that "such stuff ought not to be believed for a moment." On May 15th Lincoln expressed himself as "quite satisfied" that Washburne had done no wrong. He was willing "that the matter may drop." By May 31st Washburne was reporting that Douglas had "ceased associating with our folks, but is very thick with the other side. He is understood to repudiate all sympathy with republicans and desires no support from them."

Washburne found Lincoln's Presidential nomination in 1860 "so unexpected we could hardly believe it," but, as a member of the Republican Executive Congressional Committee for the campaign, he promised to "devote my whole soul and energies to the campaign." Interestingly enough, he reported that Stephen Douglas thought the choice of Lincoln "the strongest that could have been made." Like many others, Congressman Washburne immediately advised the candidate to "keep very quiet and out of the way as much as possible."

Washburne's residence in the Capital made him an especially valuable reporter for Lincoln. In May he informed the candidate that "Pennsylvanians of American [i.e., Know-Nothing] proclivities are some what troubled" by the planks in the Republican platform which affirmed the rights of immigrants. They had appealed to Washburne to suggest that

Lincoln's letter accepting the nomination "say nothing about the platform, so they can support you without committing themselves to those planks." Washburne asserted that "we must have" the American element in that state; he thought the request "worth considering." Lincoln ignored the advice.

In Congress, Washburne was more a doer than an orator, but on May 29th he delivered a speech, later widely reprinted as *Abraham Lincoln, His Personal History and Public Record*. Washburne admitted that it "was hastily got up," but he thought it "necessary . . . that your record while in Congress should be brought out in answer to the misrepresentations already made." A full page of the eight-page pamphlet explained that Lincoln voted in favor of supplies and land bounties for soldiers even though he opposed the Mexican War. The Republican Congressional Committee printed the speech and made it available for fifty cents per hundred. Copies of it were among the 40,000 speeches and documents (on the average) which the Committee distributed at the height of the campaign in the fall (the documents were franked by the Congress's free-mailing privilege, a form of Federal funding of election campaigns in Lincoln's day). The Committee was inexhaustible in its attentions to voters. One of Washburne's letters introduced Lincoln to one H.P. Scholte, an Iowan of Dutch descent, who had been in Washington translating Republican campaign materials into Dutch.

As election day approached, Washburne, who adhered to the philosophy that "there is no telling who will be governor

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, His Personal History and Public Record.

SPEECH

OF

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE, OF ILLINOIS.

Delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, May 29, 1860.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. WASHBURNE, of Illinois, said:
Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Republican party, through its proper organization, has placed in nomination for President of the United States, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, of Illinois. The people, who will be called upon to pass upon that nomination, have a right to inquire into the life, the character, and the political opinions, of the man who is commended to their suffrages for the highest office in their gift. The State which I in part represent on this floor, having been honored by this nomination, I come here to-day to speak of the personal and political history of the candidate. I have known Mr. Lincoln well for twenty years. I have known him in private life, I have known him at the bar, and have been associated with him in every political contest in our State since the advent of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," in 1840. While I may speak with the accents of a strong personal friendship, I shall speak with the frankness of conscious truth, and, I trust, without exaggeration.

Springing from the humblest ranks in life, and unaided by the adventitious supports of family or wealth, Mr. Lincoln has reached his present exalted position by the strength of his will, the power of his intellect, and the honesty of his heart. He was born in Hardin county, Kentucky, February 12, 1808; his family removed to Spencer county, Indiana, in 1816, where he passed his boyhood amid the roughest hardships and the most trying experiences of a frontier life. Without schools, and almost without books, he spent his time amid the wild and romantic scenes of the border, alleviating the hard labors of the farm by the sport of the huntsman. Of fine physical development, with a vigorous intellect, quick intelligence, ready wit, and genial character, he gave early evidences of the superiority he has since attained. His first advent into the great world, from the comparative seclusion of his frontier home, was down the Wabash and

Ohio rivers in charge of a flat-boat, of a class known to all the old river men of the West as "broad-horns." These boats, laden with the productions of the farmers, floated down stream until a market was found for the cargo; and when that was disposed of, the boat itself was sold, and those in charge made their way back, in the best manner they could, to their homes. A great many persons have heard Mr. Lincoln relate, with inimitable effect, the anecdotes of his experience of that portion of his life.

In 1830, Mr. Lincoln emigrated to that State, with which his great name has now become historically connected. He passed the first year in Macon county, and actively labored on a farm, where he and a fellow-laborer, by the name of John Hanks, split three thousand rails. This portion of the history of Mr. Lincoln's life gave rise to the incident in the late Republican State Convention at Decatur, in Macon county, which awakened the intensest enthusiasm of that vast concourse of citizens from all parts of the State. Mr. Lincoln was present as a spectator in that Convention, and was invited to take a seat upon the platform. When he had taken his seat, it was announced to the Convention that John Hanks, an old Democrat, who had grown gray in the service of that party, desired to make a contribution to the Convention; and the offer being accepted, forthwith two old-time fence rails, decorated with flags and streamers, were borne through the crowd into the Convention, bearing the inscription:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
THE RAIL CANDIDATE
FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860.
Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in
1830 by John Hanks and Abe Lincoln.

The effect was electrical. One spontaneous burst of applause went up from all parts of the "wigwam." Of course, Mr. Lincoln was called out, and made an explanation of the matter. He

PUBLISHED BY THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE. PRICE 50 CENTS PER HUNDRED.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. This Dutch translation of Lincoln's Cooper Institute Address, perhaps the work of F. P. Scholte, was an 1860 campaign document. It is the only Dutch title listed for 1860 in Jay Monaghan's *Lincoln Bibliography*, 1839-1939.

Start bill May 16 1905 NO 1

De Republikeinsche Party verdedigd enz.

REDEVOERING

VAN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

IN HET COOPER INSTITUUT: FEBRUARY 27, 1860.

MR. PRESIDENT EN MEDEBURGERS VAN NEW YORK:

De daadzaken waarmede ik my dezes avond zal bezig houden zijn meestal out en bekend, ook is er niets nieuws in het gebruik dat ik er van zal maken. Indien er eenige nieuwheid in is, het zal zijn de manier om de daadzaken te voorstellen, en de gevolgtrekkingen en opmerkingen die uit deze voorstelling voortvloeien.

Senator Douglas zeide, in zyne redevoering laatste herfst, te Columbus, in Ohio, als opgegeven in de "Nieuw York Times."

"Onze vaders, toen zy het Gouvernement vormden waaronder wy leven, verstonden dit vraagstuk juist zoo goed, en zelfs beter als wy tegenwoordig doen." Ik stem dit ten volle toe, en neem het aan als een tekst voor deze redevoering. Ik doe dit omdat het een juist en door beiden erkend aanvangpunt levert voor een verhandeling der Republikeinen en die vleugel van de Demokratie aangevoerd door Senator Douglas. Het laat eenvoudig het onderzoek over, "Hoe verstonden die vaders het vermeete vraagstuk?"

Wat is het grondwerk van het Gouvernement waaronder wy leven? Het antwoord moet zijn: "De Constitutie der Vereenigde Staten." Die Constitutie bestaat uit de oorspronkelijke, opgesteld in 1787 (en waaronder het tegenwoordige Gouvernement het eerst in werking trad), en twaalf daarna gemaakte verbeteringen, waarvan de tien eerste gemaakt werden in 1789.

Wie waren onze vaders die de Constitutie maakten? Ik veronderstel de 39 die het oorspronkelijke stuk tekenden moogen met regt onze vaders genoemd worden die dat ge deelde van ons tegenwoordig Gouvernement ontwierpen. Het is volkomen waar niet alleen dat zy getrouw vertegenwoordigden het denkbeeld en gevoelen van het geheele volk ter dier tyd. Hunne algemeen bekende namen behooren nu niet te worden herhaald. Ik neem dan deze 39 voort het tegenwoordig ge als onze vaders die het Gouvernement ontworpen waaronder wy nu leven. Wat is nu het vraagstuk het welk volgens de tekst, deze vaders juist zoo goed, en zelfs beter verstonden, dan wy nu doen?

Het is dit. Verleed een juiste verdeeling tusschen plaatselyk en federaal gezag, of iets in de Constitutie aan ons Gouvernement het bebeer in betrekking tot Slaverny in ons Federaal Grondgebied?

Hierop antwoord Douglas bevestigend en de Republikeinen ontkennend. Dit vormt het verschil, en dit verschil, dit vraagstuk, is juist dat geene wat de tekst verklaard dat onze

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FIGURE 3. Washburne's campaign speech for Lincoln.

till after the election," was not overconfident, but he warned Lincoln that he would be "utterly overrun" with office-seekers if he won. And the Illinois Congressman, though "reluctant to be among . . . the crowd," did say that he would like to see Lincoln too. He did so on November 12th and "found Old Abe in fine spirits and excellent health, and quite undisturbed by the blusterings of the disunionists and traitors." When he returned to Washington, Washburne found that "secession feeling has assumed proportions of which I had but a faint conception," and he told Lincoln that "our friends generally in the west are not fully apprised of the imminent peril which now environs us." Washburne expressed Congress's feelings for "conciliation but firmness" and called for "masterly inactivity."

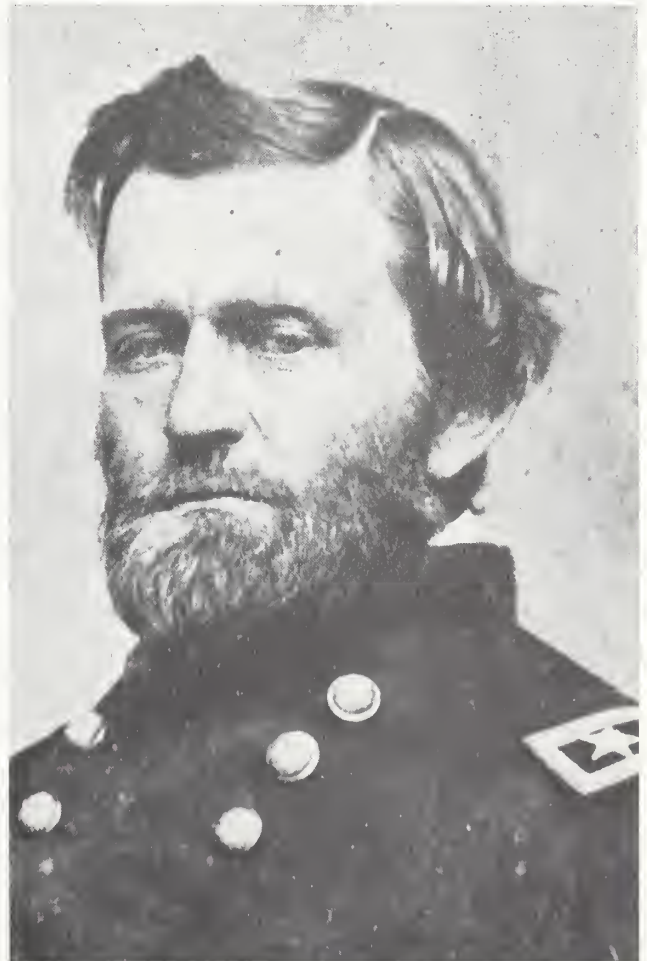
Washburne's hopes rose and fell, but, in general, he sensed that real trouble was brewing. Having had some acquaintance with Winfield Scott when he was the Whig candidate for President in 1852, Washburne was now able to see the old general in Washington and keep Lincoln, who was still in Springfield, in touch with the crisis over Federal forts in the South and later with the security measures for the city and Lincoln's inauguration. He gave Lincoln advice: not to compromise on the platform, to procure a private secretary who would not sell his influence and who knew etiquette and French, and to stay in a private residence in Washington before the inauguration. He opposed Simon Cameron's appointment to the Cabinet vigorously.

Early in January, Washburne became alarmed about a conspiracy to seize the Capital and prevent the inauguration. With William Seward and two other members of Congress, Washburne employed two New York detectives to investigate the rumors of conspiracies. He referred to them in later letters as "our friends from N.Y.," and expressed great fears about

the state of opinion in Baltimore. Washburne's fears calmed late in January but rose again early in February. He was in the end the only man on the platform when Lincoln came into Washington secretly for his inauguration.

Unfortunately for the historian, once Washburne and Lincoln were together in Washington, the correspondence between them decreased in frequency and importance. They no longer had to discuss political matters by mail. As a Congressman, Washburne became the particular champion of fellow Galena townsman Ulysses S. Grant. He saw to everything for General Grant's career from military promotions to the coining of celebratory medals. His loyalty knew no limits. When Grant issued his infamous Order No. 11 banning "Jews, as a class" from the Department of the Tennessee late in 1862, Lincoln eventually received so many protests that he revoked it. Washburne protested Lincoln's revocation, saying that he considered "it the wisest order yet made by a military Command." For a period in 1863, Washburne accompanied Grant on campaigns and gave a wonderful portrait of that colorful and dedicated soldier. His "entire baggage consists of a tooth brush," Washburne said. A thirteen-year-old boy carried the general's sword. He had no servant, no blanket, no overcoat, and no clean shirt.

In Congress, Washburne loyally supported the administration's war effort. His view of the task was simple. As he expressed it after the Battle of Bull Run, "We will whip the traitors yet. Their barbarities towards our wounded will arouse a spirit of vengeance which will not be appeased till their leaders are all hung and their followers are driven into the gulf." He voted with the more zealous Republicans and was a tough man in a floor battle. When Congressmen debated the bill to emancipate slaves in the District of Columbia in the spring of 1862, Washburne knew who had the votes to win: "If gentlemen of the other side offer amendments, let us hear them, and then vote them down." Like fellow Illinois Congressman Isaac Arnold, Washburne was



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FIGURE 4. Washburne's favorite general, U. S. Grant.

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an ardent supporter of the bill to make the old Illinois and Michigan Canal of Whig days a ship canal connecting the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.

Washburne was among the earliest to seek Lincoln's commitment to run for reelection, asking him to "let some of your confidential friends know your wishes" as early as October of 1863. He was a member of the Union Executive Congressional Committee for the campaign and once again franked thousands of speeches and documents. He even assessed Lincoln's Cabinet members \$250 each for the circulation of documents. He became quite alarmed at the state of opinion in his home state and repeatedly pleaded with the President to furlough Illinois soldiers to vote in the election. He acted as an intermediary with Grant when Lincoln wished to use a letter from Grant for campaign purposes. The general replied to Washburne's inquiry that Lincoln could use "anything I have ever written to him as he sees fit," but added: "I think however for him to attempt to answer all the charges the opposition will bring against him will be like setting a maiden to work to prove her chastity."

Like others of Lincoln's friends in Congress, Washburne is a figure badly in need of a biography. The sketch of his career here is suggestive of his importance and of the illumination such a biography would bring to our understanding of the Sixteenth President.

Editor's Note: This article is based on the following letters from Washburne to Lincoln in the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress: December 19, 1854; December 26, 1854; January 17, 1855; May 2, 1858; May 31, 1858; May 19, 1860; May 20, 1860; May 30, 1860; December 9, 1860; January 6, 1863; and May 1, 1863. Grant's letter to Washburne about Lincoln's use of his letters is also in that collection (September 21, 1864).

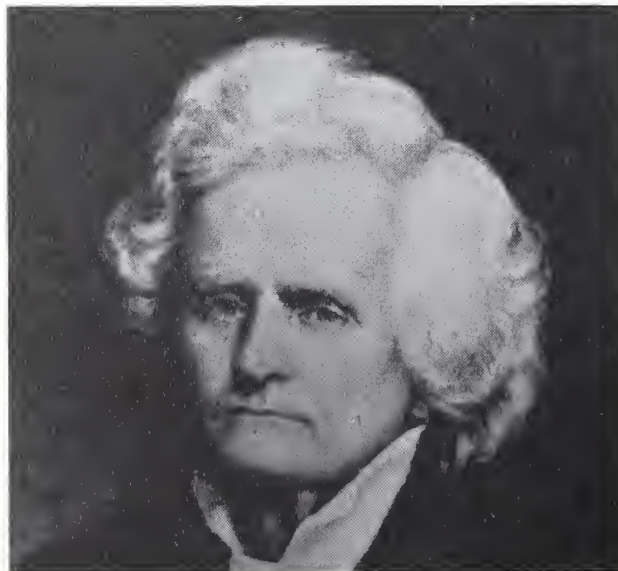
LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: STEPHEN T. LOGAN COPY

Many would say that this, the sixth article in a series on the presentation copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois*, should have been the first. The copy presented to the "Hon. S.T. Logan, From his friend A. Lincoln" is the only known copy signed in ink. Harry Pratt, who published the first survey of these famous books in *Manuscripts* in the summer of 1954, and Charles Hamilton, the famous manuscript dealer, believed that this was very likely the first copy Lincoln gave away. Their theory was that Lincoln discovered when he signed this book that the soft paper caused the ink to smear and thereafter inscribed the copies in pencil.

FIGURE 5. Washburne's committee franked speeches on this list by the thousands in 1864. Washburne did not include a speech of his own on the list, but other members of the committee did. The committee sent circulars and speeches to Republican groups. On the backs of the speeches, they advertised other available speeches. One of these lists is pictured here.

Stephen Trigg Logan was Lincoln's second law partner and a lifelong friend. Of those who received the known presentation copies, Logan was by far the most closely associated with Lincoln. If he gave copies to David Davis or to John G. Nicolay, for example, they have never come to light.

The Logan copy was in the hands of the Logan family until 1946. Logan's great-granddaughter, Martha Coleman Bray, received the book at the death of her father. He was Christopher Bush Coleman, the son of Lewis Harrison Coleman, who married Stephen T. Logan's daughter Jennie. She sold it to William H. Townsend, a noted Lincoln collector and author from Lexington, Kentucky. Townsend at one time owned two presentation copies of the *Debates*, the Logan copy and the copy given to Job Fletcher. In 1953 he sold the Fletcher copy to the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, which in turn sold it to Lincoln collector Justin G. Turner of Hollywood, California. Sometime later, Turner also acquired Townsend's other copy. In 1968 Victor B. Levit purchased the Logan copy from a sale of Turner's collection at a Charles Hamilton Autographs, Inc., auction. Mr. Levit of the law firm of Long & Levit in San Francisco still owns the Logan copy and very kindly sent me much of the information on which this article is based.



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FIGURE 6. Stephen T. Logan.



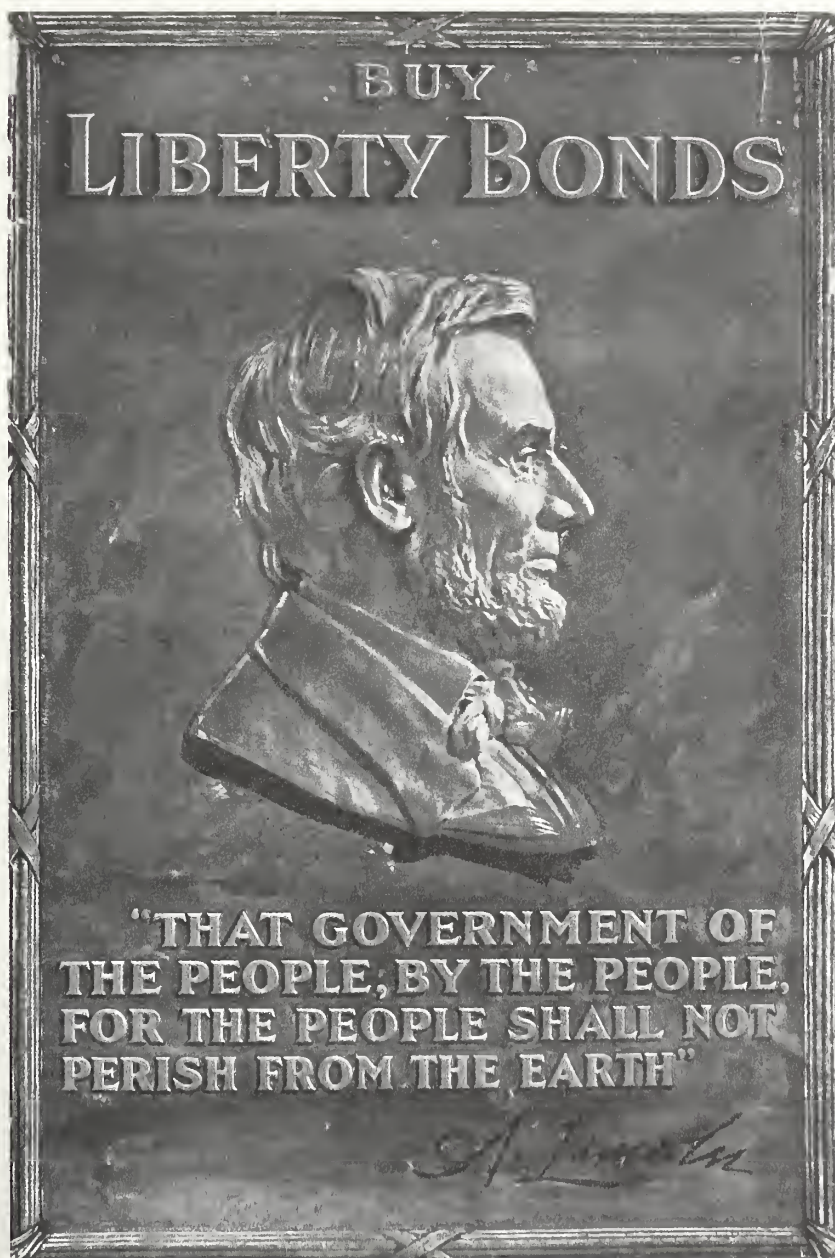
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Number 1716

Of Tangled Stories and Charnwood's *Lincoln*



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FIGURE 1. The centennial celebration of Lincoln's birth in 1909 helped make Lincoln's image a powerful national symbol. By the time of World War I, Lincoln's face appeared frequently in war propaganda. In the same era, Charnwood's *Lincoln* helped make him an international figure.

Godfrey Rathbone Benson, Lord Charnwood, was an unlikely Lincoln biographer. The British upper classes were notoriously pro-Southern during the American Civil War, and he was born in that station in life in 1864. He did well at Oxford University, where he was later a tutor. He became a Member of Parliament and the Mayor of Lichfield.

After his graduation from Oxford in 1887, Charnwood made a tour of the United States. He returned briefly—to Boston and New York—in 1894. In politics, he was a Liberal. He was obviously interested in the United States, and, as a boy, he had read Charles G. Leland's *Abraham Lincoln*, a book memorable enough to be mentioned in the brief bibliographical note at the end of Charnwood's biography of Lincoln.

Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln* was published in England in 1916. Available evidence suggests that his boyhood interest in Lincoln, his acquaintance with and admiration for the United States, and his liberal political leanings helped lead him to writing the book. The date of its publication, however, more strongly suggests that the atmosphere of co-operation between the United States and England, which grew up at the time of the First World War, must have played a large role in molding a sympathetic interest into the drive to write a substantial book on Abraham Lincoln.

The result, as all Lincoln students are aware, was wonderful. George Bernard Shaw told Lincoln collector Judd Stewart that Charnwood's "very penetrating biography" created "a cult of Lincoln in England." Its reception in America, following its publication there in 1917, was equally enthusiastic. The enthusiasm, as Paul M. Angle later noted, was lasting and pointed to merits in the work beyond its timeliness for the period of the final thaw in Anglo-American relations. In 1935 Roy P. Basler thought that Carl Sandburg and Nathaniel Wright Stephenson presented "the best version of the private Lincoln," but Charnwood's was still "the best of the public Lincoln." As late as 1947, Benjamin P. Thomas, an excellent judge of such matters, called Charnwood's book "the best one-volume life of Lincoln ever written."

Lincoln students may be a little unclear in regard to the precise reason Charnwood wrote his book, but they are unanimous on the reasons for its high reputation and popularity. David M. Potter's *The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography* identified these clearly. No Lincoln biography before



Courtesy Adams National Historic Site
(from the *Dictionary of American Portraits*, published by Dover Publications, Inc., in 1967)

FIGURE 2. Henry Adams.

Charnwood's was "genuinely contemplative." Charnwood's *Lincoln*, as it is usually called, was. Paul M. Angle's *A Shelf of Lincoln Books* put it this way: "... it is not primarily factual, as for example, Nicolay's *Short Life* is factual. The emphasis is rather upon interpretation and analysis." Potter also pointed to the book's "notable literary excellence." Angle credited Charnwood with bringing "literary skill to the Lincoln theme," far exceeding the prosaic Nicolay and Hay or the hasty journalistic style of Ida Tarbell. Potter found "especial merit" in Charnwood's ability "to grasp the universality of Lincoln's significance." Angle also noted the Englishman's "conviction that Lincoln was one of the world's truly great men." Though critics did not say so explicitly, this trait set the book apart from the narrow nationalism even of contemporary biographers as talented as Stephenson and Albert Beveridge.

Charnwood was sympathetic, but he wrote from a cultural distance that Midwesterners like William Herndon, Jesse Weik, John Nicolay, and John Hay lacked perforce. This exempted Charnwood from a kind of partisanship that no American at the time seemed able to escape. Potter saw in this the root of Charnwood's unembarrassed ability to ask the "hard" questions about Lincoln:

Did Lincoln temporize too much on slavery? Was there a quality of "cheap opportunism" in his political record? Did his policy at Fort Sumter differ from Buchanan's enough to justify the customary practice of gibbeting the silly old man while leaving Lincoln free from criticism? Was he, in the last analysis, responsible for precipitating the Civil War?

Lord Charnwood admitted that he did not "shrink... from the display of a partisanship" that led him to state frankly that the South's cause was wrong. What made his book exceptional was, as Potter stated, that Charnwood at least asked the questions. What also made the book good was Charnwood's view—as accurate today as it was in 1916—that the "true obligation of impartiality is that he [the author] should conceal no fact which, in his own mind, tells against his views." His was not the advocate's effort to pile up all the facts that help his argument but the fair-minded historian's

attempt to answer those arguments which seem most telling against his own case.

Charnwood, therefore, was never afraid to criticize Lincoln. Relying on the inaccurate literature available at the time, for example, Charnwood pictured Lincoln's father as "a migrant" and claimed that the "unseemliness in talk of rough, rustic boys flavoured the great President's conversation through life." (He saw, more accurately, that Lincoln was "void of romantic fondness for vanished joys of youth.") He labeled Lincoln's use of martial law in the North a usurpation of power.

Charnwood did no original research for the book and relied for facts on a small number of standard works, but he was a well-read man who used his generally cultured background to good effect. In a passage of marvelous irony, the learned Englishman criticized one of America's own great critics of democracy, Henry Adams, by saying, "It is a contemptible trait in books like that able novel 'Democracy,' that they treat the sentiment which attached to the 'Rail-splitter' as anything but honourable." Less accurate in the long run but appealing in the period of the book's greatest popularity was the viewpoint Charnwood derived from reading James Bryce's *American Commonwealth*. That critique of American politics made Charnwood hostile to political parties and the spoils system that Lincoln used so well. Charnwood saw American party politics as avoiding serious issues and largely incapable of producing great leaders. Of Lincoln's election in 1860, he said that "the fit man was chosen on the very ground of his supposed unfitness."

Lord Charnwood appreciated Lincoln's common origins, but he dwelled particularly on Lincoln's statesmanship. Secession, to Charnwood, was a broadly popular movement in the South aimed at saving slavery, and Lincoln's efforts to counter it were noble, progressive, and somehow Christian. Following a current of British military opinion at the time, he praised Lincoln's abilities as a commander in chief. He did not belittle the Emancipation Proclamation. It could be interpreted as a narrowly military measure only in law, Charnwood argued. Given the limited research he did for the biography, one is not surprised to learn that Charnwood repeated some spurious quotations and anecdotes. He often handled these well. Of the apocryphal story of Lincoln's clemency for the sleeping sentinel William Scott, Charnwood concluded: "If the story is not true—and there is no reason whatever to doubt it—still it is a remarkable man of whom



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FIGURE 3. Jesse Weik.

people spin yarns of that kind." A man of deep religious interests himself, Charnwood noted Lincoln's growth in that realm to the "language of intense religious feeling" in the Second Inaugural Address.

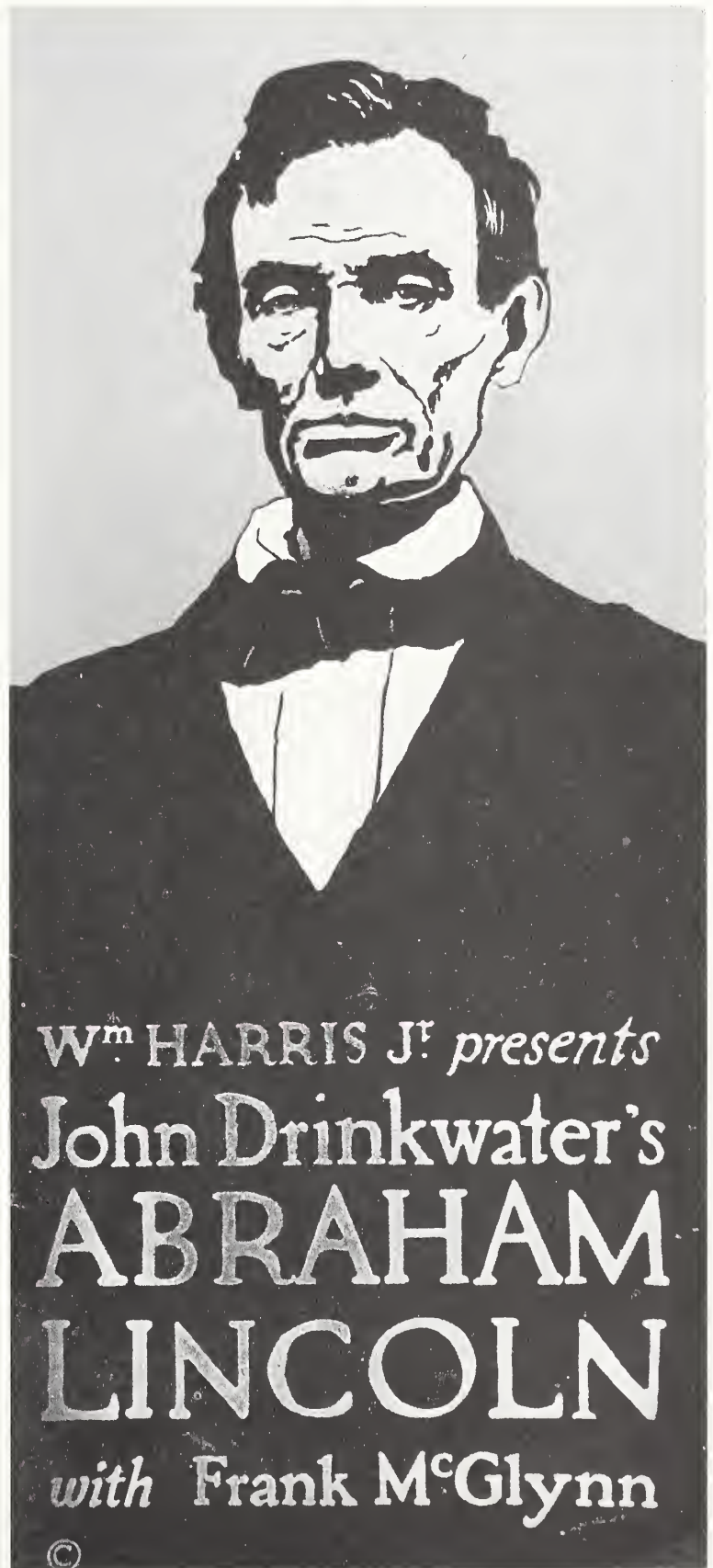
Charnwood kept his focus on the meaning of Lincoln's efforts to save the Union. These, he thought, were attempts to save democratic government for the whole world. He properly stressed Lincoln's praise for Henry Clay as a patriot who "loved his country, partly because it was his own country, and mostly because it was a free country."

Maintaining focus in a Lincoln biography was a real achievement, and focusing it on the truly important questions was Charnwood's greatest achievement. It is difficult to discover the means by which he did this because Charnwood letters are rather scarce in this country. This institution, though it seeks the letters of Lincoln's biographers, has not a single Charnwood letter. The Illinois State Historical Library has less than half a dozen. Among the later, however, there is one illuminating letter to Jesse W. Weik.

Written on May 17, 1919, just after Charnwood's triumphant lecture tour of the United States, the letter acknowledged Weik's gift of two Lincoln autographs for Lady Charnwood's autograph collection. Echoing a phrase from a famous Lincoln letter, Lord Charnwood characterized the gift as "such an addition . . . as she had never hoped to obtain, knowing that indeed Lincoln autographs are not plenty as blackberries." He apologized for the delay in writing. His younger son, eight years old, had been killed in a fall from a pony. He told Weik that the United States appeared much changed since his first visit thirty-one years before, "mainly . . . for the good."

Naturally, the letter soon got around to the subject of Abraham Lincoln. On his recent tour of the United States, Lord Charnwood wrote, "I came across, & indeed have been coming across ever since I published my book, many signs of the tendency, which had been active, to make a sort of stained-glass-window figure of Lincoln, quite removed from genuine human sympathy & impossible really to revere." He noted, tactfully, that Weik's own book, written with William Herndon, "made it impossible that such a tendency should lastingly prevail." In writing Weik, Charnwood diplomatically avoided commenting directly on the overall accuracy of the Herndon-Weik book. He said only that he had studied it carefully or that it prevented uncritical hero worship. Charnwood was careful thus to pay his "respects to one of the pioneer writers on the subject of which" Charnwood was "a junior student."

Charnwood's tour had brought him into contact with the controversies over Lincoln's ancestry, then raging in America. "The question," Charnwood commented, "is of little interest in itself,—not that heredity is an unimportant influence (for of course it is vastly important) but that its working is generally too subtle to be traced, that when we have the correct names of a great man's grand-parents & great-grand-parents (& how few of us can name all our great-grand-parents!) they generally remain mere names, and finally that nothing in his or any man's ancestry adds anything or detracts anything to or from his individual worth." Here again was Lord Charnwood at his tactful and ironic best—an Englishman, who did "not care two pence, or a cent (which is less) about the authority of this or any other pedigree (my own for example)," giving lessons on individualism to an American whose book had made rather a sensation for what it said about Lincoln's ancestry.



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FIGURE 4. British playwright John Drinkwater drew inspiration for his popular play about Lincoln from Lord Charnwood's biography. The play was first performed in America in 1919.

"So," Charnwood said, "this question thoroughly bores me." Then, remembering the letter's recipient, he added a hasty parenthetical comment—"except that Lincoln's own interest in the subject is an interesting trait in him as Herndon & Weik record it." Still, having written a book about Lincoln, Charnwood felt that he might be "bound to know what there is to be known about it." Several questions followed for the sake of "antiquarian accuracy."

Charnwood had known of the questions surrounding Lincoln's Hanks ancestry when he wrote his book, and he queried Weik about new theories on the legitimacy of Lincoln's mother. In America, Charnwood had been astonished to learn that some raised questions about Lincoln's own legitimacy. "My time at Springfield," Charnwood said, "(in which I met some delightful people of the older generation who gave me, though without much detail a vivid impression of old times) was a little too much taken up with hearing tangled stories in which this question [of Lincoln's legitimacy] got mixed up with the other which I have spoken of [the question of Lincoln's mother's legitimacy]." One man in particular had been much taken with the notion that Lincoln was descended from John Marshall. "I think my friend," Charnwood went on, "is merely suffering from a variety of the same disease which makes others desire to derive Lincoln from wholly respectable people of [as] good standing as possible. He can not suffer it that a great man should have arisen without some ancestor of manifest intellectual eminence." Charnwood was "inclined to treat the idea as rubbish," but he still wanted to know whether there was anything to it.

Lord Charnwood concluded his letter thus:

I feel almost ashamed to have filled up my letter with questions which are of no importance in comparison with the actual life & work & character of the man who was any way Abraham Lincoln whoever his ancestors were.

Never afraid to ask questions or hear answers that might change his mind, Lord Charnwood nevertheless kept his focus always on the essentials of Lincoln's greatness.

Lloyd Ostendorf Joins Bibliography Committee

Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio, will join the Bibliography Committee which passes judgment on the inclusion of items in *Lincoln Lore's* Cumulative Bibliography. Born in Dayton on June 23, 1921, Mr. Ostendorf graduated from Stivers High School in his home town in 1939. He began studying art after his graduation. He attended the Dayton Art Institute from 1939 to 1941. He spent the summer of 1940 in New York City, studying with cartoonist Milton Caniff and his associates. In 1941 Mr. Ostendorf enlisted in the Army Air Corps, with which he served until 1945.

The war interrupted Mr. Ostendorf's career in illustration and portrait work which began in 1939. He has furnished art work for many different publications and projects, and much of it has focused on Abraham Lincoln. Fascinated by the "oddly balanced ruggedness and beauty" of Lincoln's face, he began drawing pictures of Lincoln when he was twelve years old. His attention naturally turned to the photographs of Lincoln which he copied and adapted. Mr. Ostendorf got special encouragement in his work from Louis A. Warren, one of the few Lincoln authorities at the time interested in encouraging work with Lincoln pictures. As he sought photographs from which to work, Mr. Ostendorf also came into contact with Frederick Hill Meserve, the first great student and collector of Lincoln photographs. Meserve was "as nice as an old man could be to a young man" who shared his interest, Mr. Ostendorf remembers.

Mr. Ostendorf's first book *A Picture Story of Abraham Lincoln* (1962), a biography for young readers, was so popular that it has been reissued by Lamplight Publishing, Inc., as *Abraham Lincoln: The Boy and the Man*. His next work was

Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose (1963), which he wrote with Charles Hamilton. This book, essential to even the smallest Lincoln library, is still available from the University of Oklahoma Press. Hardly a week passes in which the staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum fails to consult this fine book to answer questions about Lincoln photographs and the many lithographs and engravings inspired by them, and this is surely true of every other Lincoln institution as well.

Mr. Ostendorf's expertise in this very specialized but popular area of Lincolniana has been widely recognized. Lincoln Memorial University awarded him the Lincoln Diploma of Honor in 1966. Lincoln College awarded him an honorary degree (Litt. D.) in 1968, and Lincoln Memorial University added another (Art. D.) in 1974. He has been the art editor of the *Lincoln Herald* since 1957, and all Lincoln students are familiar with the wonderfully varied covers he provides for that quarterly journal. He was also an honorary member of the National Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission.

Mr. Ostendorf, in addition to illustrating greeting cards and religious materials, maintains his interest in Lincolniana. He recently completed a painting of Lincoln's stepmother for the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon, Illinois. Another recent portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln as a young woman hangs in the restored Todd home in Lexington, Kentucky. Studying photographs in order to determine what historical figures looked like in periods when no photographs of them are available is a special interest. Mr. Ostendorf has also been working on three books: a study of Lincoln portraits from life (with Harold Holzer); the recollections of Mariah Vance, a Lincoln family maid in Springfield (with David Balsiger); and a Lincoln family photograph album (with James T. Hickey).

Over the years, Mr. Ostendorf's interests have grown from Lincoln's physical appearance to all aspects of his life. His general knowledge and his special expertise make him a most welcome addition to the advisory board.



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FIGURE 5. Lloyd Ostendorf

